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# CRUMBS OF PITY



# CRUMBS OF PITY

AND OTHER VERSES

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

SIX LIVES OF GREAT MEN

BY

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
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# CRUMBS OF PITY

AND OTHER VERSES



## CRUMBS OF PITY.

KEEN is the morning, keen and bright,  
And all the lawn with frost is white ;  
In every bush, in every tree,  
The birds sit watching warily.  
Now out, now in, they hop and peer,  
And cock their cunning heads to hear  
The chirping of a childish voice :  
They know it well, and they rejoice  
When, resolutely stepping, comes,  
To scatter here her gift of crumbs,  
Her round face topped with shining curls,  
My little laughing girl of girls.  
And, O ye soft and feathered things,  
Redbreasts who flit on fearless wings,  
Familiar, friendly, boldly shy,  
Birds of the liquid, trustful eye ;  
Ye sparrows chattering o'er your food,  
Linnets, and all the pretty brood  
Of finches, blackbirds yellow-billed,  
And thrushes with your music stilled—  
Since winter's icy breath makes mute  
The swelling ripple of your flute ;

Ye, too, ye sable-suited rooks,  
Timid for all your threatening looks,  
Who in solemnity survey  
Your twittering colleagues at their play,  
Where on the poplar's top you swing,  
And desperately claw and cling,  
Then, when each bird has pecked its last,  
And all the fluttering rout is past,  
And all the chirpings duly dumb,  
Swoop down, but rarely find a crumb ;—  
All ye, whose hungry bills are fed  
By Helen's daily doles of bread,  
Be not afraid, be not afraid  
To gather round my rosy maid.  
Oh, give a kindly thought to her,  
Your little friend and minister ;  
And, as you watch her, pass the word—  
“ She's but a plump unfeathered bird.”  
So when the day is done, and night  
Sets all the twinkling stars alight,  
You'll breathe a bird-wish, as you sleep,  
That One who guards the birds may keep  
Cosy and safe from every ill,  
From winds that bite and frosts that chill,  
And through the night's long hours defend  
The birds' unfeathered little friend.

Ye sportive mice that swiftly go  
Behind the wainscot to and fro,  
And sometimes to your outlets creep  
And half pop out and take a peep,

Alert, but ready to retreat,  
Into a world where cheese smells sweet—  
Ye quivering, twisting specks of fur  
With whisking tails and ears astir,  
We do not grudge you of our store :  
A little less, a little more,  
It matters not, so nibble on  
In peace, then like a flash begone.  
I cannot bear to bar the house  
To here and there a tiny mouse.  
And Helen, if she marks at all  
Your scamperings from wall to wall,  
Will smile to hear you frisk and run :—  
“It’s mousies, Daddy, having fun.”

So, Helen, ere at eve you steep  
Your busy baby-brain in sleep,  
Your mother takes you on her knee  
And whispers to you tenderly.  
You watch her lips, you clasp her hand,  
And, though you may not understand  
Each word she says or all that’s meant,  
You listen and you purr assent.  
And it may chance that, on a day  
Far hence, to this your thoughts will stray,  
And in a dream you’ll seem to hear  
The words with all their meaning clear :  
Ah, then you’ll recollect and know  
What the dear voice said long ago :—  
“ My sweet, be sure no gentle thought  
That from God’s love a ray has caught,

No tender childish pity spent  
On creatures meek and innocent,  
No mercy for their lowly lot  
Is ever wasted or forgot.  
God, who gave children pity, heeds  
Such loving thoughts, such gentle deeds :  
He sets them, gold and clustering gems,  
On angels' brows as diadems,  
And looks Himself in pity mild  
On bird, and mouse, and little child."

## ON SATURDAY MORNING EARLY.

ON Saturday next at half-past eight—

I mustn't be half a second late—

I'm going out at the garden gate

When the dew is glittery-pearly.

I'm going, I'm going, I don't know where,

But I think I shall find some others there,

On Saturday next if the sun shines fair,

On Saturday morning early.

Perhaps it's the home of the big tom-tit,

Or the land where the little blue fairies flit,

For Daddy he said I should visit it,

And go for a treat alone, too,

In a marvellous carriage with golden springs,

And six white horses with twelve white wings,

And a coachman all over curls and things,

And a footman all of my own, too.

Or perhaps I shall go to the doll-country,

Where the dollies are all as big as me,

And all have raspberry jam for tea,

With huge thick slices of *some* cake :

It might be sponge, or it might be bright  
With cherries, and iced as smooth and white  
As the pond when the feathery snow falls light,  
Or it might be, possibly, plum-cake.

What fun it'll be to see Boy Blue,  
And Jack and the stalk that grew and grew,  
And Puss in Boots and his Marquis too,  
    And giants and giantesses ;  
And wonderful gleaming golden towns,  
And Kings with sceptres and swords and crowns,  
And Queens with fur on their satin gowns,  
    And beautiful young Princesses !

And if I should see Red Riding Hood  
And her grandmamma in the dark old wood,  
I shall run away, as a good girl should  
    For fear that a wolf might meet her.  
But grandmamma will perhaps explain  
If teeth, when they bite you, give you pain,  
And how she ever got out again  
    When the wolf had managed to eat her.

And, oh, I shall find where the tulips go,  
And the golden crocuses all aglow,  
And where the little white daisies grow  
    When they vanish away together ;  
And the place where the pretty blue-bells stay,  
And the pinks and the roses bright and gay,  
When they go away and "Good-bye," they say,  
    "Good-bye for the winter weather."

I must take my funny dog Buff, the Skye,  
With his little short legs and his ears cocked high,  
And his long rough hair, and his hidden eye,

    And his face like a great grey pansy.

Doll Jane I shall leave on the nursery floor,  
For she doesn't go travelling any more :—  
Since her head got squeezed in the bedroom door  
    There's not very much she can see.

So I'm ready, I'm ready ! I've packed some socks,  
A bonnet, a bib, and two holland frocks,  
And a pair of shoes in a brand-new box ;

    And I've given my Mummy warning.

I shall take a mug and a fork and spoon,  
And the musical box that plays one tune,  
And I'll hurry away—but I'll come back soon—

    On Saturday next in the morning.

## THE RAG-DOLL.

THE Rag-doll here and the Rag-doll there ! take care of the  
Rag-doll, do !

She's a dollopy, dumpy, dowdy doll with a grin on her face  
for two.

She's a dollopy doll with two stuffed legs—but she's only  
got one stuffed arm—

But, oh ! take care of the Rag-doll, do, and see that she  
takes no harm.

Her face is as flat as a girdle-cake, the tint of her cheeks is  
pink ;

Her eyes have a fixed and glassy stare that would make a  
policeman blink.

Her nose is a blob and her teeth are paint, and I'm sorry I  
can't say more

For the looks of the doll who takes her ease all day on the  
nursery floor.

But you can't judge dolls by their looks, you know : this  
doll has a wondrous way

Of being a Fairy Prince by night, while she's only a doll  
by day :

A Fairy Prince with his tossing curls and a smile that is  
bright and bold,  
And a trusty sword and a waving plume on a helmet of  
shining gold.

And forth on his milk-white steed he rides, a gay and a  
gallant sight—

He was only a feminine doll by day ; he's a regular Prince  
by night.

He fights and he curvets all night long at the head of his  
troop of men,

And, lo, at the break of dawn he's back, a dowdy old doll  
again.

On the following night it is presto, change ! and, lo, she is  
off to steer

On a ship of her own to the Southern Seas, for now she's a  
buccaneer.

There hasn't been seen a Pirate King that ever had half his  
scars,

Or caverns so full of round doubloons and jewels and  
golden bars.

And nobody chops and lops like him, or sneers with such  
curling lips

At the shivering, shrinking, cringing crews, and the  
captains of merchant ships,

And he laughs, ha ! ha ! when the storm winds blow, and  
he never gives way to fear,

This scar-seamed King of the Caribbees who is only a Rag-  
doll here.

A Beauty asleep, a Gnome, a Queen, a Knight of the Golden  
Spur—

Old Raggy she takes them all in turns : they're one and  
the same to her.

She has mounted in haste her chanfroned horse, and her  
sword she has girded on,

And has thundered away on a new Crusade to the towers of  
Ascalon.

She has thundered away with the Christian host a Saracen  
town to win,

But, oh, when the night is half-way through she's fighting  
as Saladin.

She's a wonderful changeable doll, in short, as ever a mortal  
knew ;

So I say, take care of the old Rag-doll, take care of the  
Rag-doll, do !

## FAIRIES ON THE LAWN.

*A Child's Recollection.*

ONE night I peeped through the window just after I went to bed ;

I ought to have been in my cot, I know, my pillow beneath my head ;

But somebody seemed to whisper “ Come ! ” and so I made up my mind,

Climbed out and tiptoed across the floor, and lifted the old red blind.

It wasn’t as dark as some nights are, for up in the purple sky

The round moon showed me her battered face : it didn’t seem very high.

And all the trees that I know so well looked funny and far and white ;

And all of them murmured, “ Hush ! hush ! hush ! we can’t make a noise to-night.”

I wasn’t afraid, not *quite* afraid, but I wasn’t as bold as brass,

When I looked and I saw a shining sight out there on the silver grass.

And oh, I think I shall never see such a beautiful sight again,  
As the wonderful shining sight I saw when I looked through the window pane.

In the place of the garden arbour with its walls and its seats of wood,  
And, its thatched roof covered with creepers a marvellous palace stood :  
I seemed to have known it always (though it couldn't be ages old),  
With its pillars of rainbow crystal and its towers of polished gold.

Then a voice said, "Look at the Fairies!" and out in a troop they came ;  
I had seen them by dozens in picture-books, and these were the very same.  
The same, only much, much better, for these were alive, alive ;  
And the sound of their little voices was the buzz of a big bee-hive.

For oh, they shouted and tumbled and frisked and fluttered and played :  
A jolly delightful romp they had, and nobody seemed afraid ;  
And I, who had held my breath so, just didn't I want to go And join in the games they played at out there on the lawn below !

I have seen my Mamma wear jewels, and these were like  
jewels bright,  
Like opals alive and leaping all over the grass at night—  
When clear from the golden palace came sounding a trumpet's call,  
And they fell into lines like a regiment and stood at attention all.

And wasn't there lovely music, the music that makes you cry,  
The music Mamma sings softly—she calls it a lullaby.  
And riding a mouse-sized charger, the tiniest ever seen,  
Out pranced to her faithful Fairies the beautiful Fairy Queen.

To think I should see her really—to think I should see her there,  
As I peeped through the bedroom window, perched up on a bedroom chair!  
I was only a little girl, you know, and I think it was very kind  
To let me look at the Fairy Queen when I lifted the old red blind.

But just as I said, "I'll ask her up to come to my room and play;  
And won't we have romps at night-time, and won't we have fun by day!"  
A black cloud covered the moon's face, and I—I was back in bed  
(But I never knew how I got there) with my pillow beneath my head.

## BACK AGAIN!

It's back again and home again to hear the thrushes sing,  
 To feel upon my face once more the breathing of the  
 Spring—

The fresh and gentle English breeze that stirs a wild desire,  
 And makes the step as light as air and sets the heart afire.

It's back again and home again ! and never have I seen  
 The hedgerows starting into life with brighter bursts of  
 green ;

A dead and joyless sight they were when April had begun,  
 But now they seem to sing with life beneath the kindly sun.

“ Make haste, ye trees,” the blackbird calls, “ your shining  
 white to don ;

The cherry-tree is ready robed, her bridal dress is on ;”  
 And out the modest blossoms peep, then flash into the light,  
 And every blazing fruit-tree bears its coronal of white.

Let others praise their foreign skies and all the claims  
 advance

Of sun-steeped fields in Italy and vine-clad slopes in France;  
 And let them sing the land of Spain and all that makes it  
 fair—

One dewy patch of English lawn is worth a province there.

One velvet patch of English lawn, and on it running free  
The little fair-haired short-frocked maid who's all the world  
to me.  
Her hair outshines Italian suns, and all the flowers that  
grace  
The meads of France can never match the roses in her  
face.

So it's back again and home again ! and when the evening  
comes  
We sit and hear the clash of swords, the rolling of the  
drums—  
(It's all a story old as old), and, lo, the trumpets call,  
And twenty thousand mail-clad men come spurring through  
the hall.

And maidens to the book-shelf bound (it serves in place of  
tree)  
Await the young, the gallant knight who rides to set them  
free ;  
And giants in the corners lurk—beware! my dear, beware!—  
And little flitting fairy shapes play sentry on the stair.

“Good-night, God bless you, Daddy,” and so it's off to bed,  
And soon upon the pillow shines the curly little head.  
Ye tricksy fairies, kind and gay, wing hither swift your  
flight,  
Oh, keep your watch about her cot and guard her through  
the night !

## PATTERING FEET.

SOMETHING's afoot ; beware, beware !  
Something is climbing the bedroom stair.  
With here a stumble and there a slip,  
Into the passage—trip, trip, trip.

Sharp little footfalls queer and quick,  
Never a careful step they pick.  
Quaintly marking a morning song,  
Hurry-scurry they rush along.

Tripping bright on the passage floor,  
Up they come to your bedroom door ;  
Never was music half so sweet  
As the pit-a-pat patter of tiny feet.

Dear little voices, high and clear,  
Ring like a bell in the sleeper's ear.  
Small hands pluck at his touzled head,  
“ Daddy, oh Daddy, get out of bed ! ”

Keeping the rules—it's all a game—  
Out they patter as in they came,  
But somehow the song moves rather slow,  
As down the passage and off they go.

• • • • •

And it's oh for the years that have passed away,  
And the feet that pattered at break of day.  
Now they are heavily booted feet,  
And they tramp and stamp in the busy street.

And some of them seemed to tire of fun,  
So they wandered away till they met the sun ;  
But he sends them sliding along his beams,  
To patter again in your morning dreams.

## A GRANDMOTHER'S GIFT.

[“I am having the little grave and cross of our baby Pamela here made lovely with wreaths and holly for to-morrow, Christmas Day. I can't bear somehow to think of the other children all happy in St Andrews with their Christmas tree and their toys and joys, and this little one lying in the cold far away, silent and alone.”—*Extract from a letter.*]

SOFT dimpled cheeks, and shining eyes of blue,  
 Wee clinging hands, and tiny tender feet,  
 That bore no burden, since they never grew  
 To climb the stairs or patter down the street ;  
 And ah, the baby smile that came and went  
 Like a meek spirit bright and innocent.

These still are with me, though my aged eyes  
 May never see them, and these arms no more  
 Meet the small arms that spread in glad surprise,  
 Or clasp the living shape that once they bore.  
 Yet in the night I sometimes wake and start  
 To feel the dead child plucking at my heart.

Poor little soul so silent and alone !  
 Lapped in the cold obliterating earth,  
 Her golden head beneath a cross of stone,  
 Low now she lies ; and I who watched her birth  
 And held her in my arms can only give  
 Flowers to her grave, and thoughts less fugitive.

Yet, while her brothers and her sister play  
    Warm in their home that fronts the Northern Sea,  
And laugh and sing the Christmas-tide away,  
    They have my smiles, but she my memory.  
    Oh, blithe young voices, I may hear you yet,  
    But not her voice whom I may not forget.

She too shall have her gifts : these hands shall spread  
    (Tread soft, speak low !) her coverlet of moss  
With fragrant violets, and by her head  
    Holly shall wreath and cluster round her cross.  
    So the white stone shall to the dead child be  
    My sign of love, her little Christmas tree.

## TO RUFUS, A SPANIEL.

RUFUS, a bright New Year ! A savoury stew,  
Bones, broth and biscuits, is prepared for you.  
See how it steams in your enamelled dish,  
Mixed in each part according to your wish.  
Hide in your straw the bones you cannot crunch—  
They'll come in handy for to-morrow's lunch ;  
Abstract with care each tasty scrap of meat,  
Remove each biscuit to a fresh retreat  
(A dog, I judge, would deem himself disgraced  
Who ate a biscuit where he found it placed) ;  
Then muzzle round and make your final sweep,  
And sleep, replete, your after-dinner sleep.  
High in our hall we've piled the fire with logs  
For you, the *doyen* of our corps of dogs.  
There, when the stroll that health demands is done,  
Your right to ease by due exertion won,  
There shall you come, and on your long-haired mat,  
Thrice turning round, shall tread the jungle flat,  
And, rhythmically snoring, dream away  
The peaceful evening of your New Year's day.

Rufus ! there are who hesitate to own  
Merits, they say, your master sees alone.

They judge you stupid, for you show no bent  
To any poodle-dog accomplishment.  
Your stubborn nature never stooped to learn  
Tricks by which mumming dogs their biscuits earn.  
Men mostly find you, if they change their seat,  
Couchant obnoxious to their blundering feet ;  
Then, when a door is closed, you steadily  
Misjudge the side on which you ought to be ;  
Yelping outside when all your friends are in,  
You raise the echoes with your ceaseless din,  
Or, always wrong, but turn and turn about,  
Howling inside when all the world is out.  
They scorn your gestures and interpret ill  
Your humble signs of friendship and goodwill ;  
Laugh at your gambols, and pursue with jeers  
The ringlets clustered on your spreading ears ;  
See without sympathy your sore distress  
When Ray obtains the coveted caress,  
And you, a jealous lump of growl and glare,  
Hide from the world your head beneath a chair.  
They say your legs are bandy—so they are :  
Nature so formed them that they might go far ;  
They cannot brook your music ; they assail  
The joyful quiverings of your stumpy tail—  
In short, in one anathema confound  
Shape, mind and heart, and all my little hound.  
Well, let them rail. If, since your life began,  
Beyond the customary lot of man  
Staunchness was yours ; if of your faithful heart  
Malice and scorn could never claim a part ;

If in your master, loving while you live,  
You own no fault or own it to forgive ;  
If, as you lay your head upon his knee,  
Your deep-drawn sighs proclaim your sympathy ;  
If faith and friendship, growing with your age,  
Speak through your eyes and all his love engage ;  
If by that master's wish your life you rule—  
If this be folly, Rufus, you're a fool.

Old dog, content you ; Rufus, have no fear :  
While life is yours and mine your place is here.  
And when the day shall come, as come it must,  
When Rufus goes to mingle with the dust  
(If Fate ordains that you shall pass before  
To the abhorred and sunless Stygian shore),  
I think old Charon, punting through the dark,  
Will hear a sudden friendly little bark ;  
And on the shore he'll mark without a frown  
A flap-eared doggie, bandy-legged and brown.  
He'll take you in : since watermen are kind,  
He'd scorn to leave my little dog behind.  
He'll ask no obol, but instal you there  
On Styx's further bank without a fare.  
There shall you sniff his cargoes as they come,  
And droop your head, and turn, and still be dumb—  
Till one fine day, half joyful, half in fear,  
You run and prick a recognising ear,  
And last, oh, rapture ! leaping to his hand,  
Salute your master as he steps to land.

## THE CANARY'S CHALLENGE.

FROM the far Harz his parents came :  
He from his birth had learnt to tame  
The longing wild, the deep delight  
That spurs th' untutored bird to flight  
Up in the azure-belts of air,  
He knows not why, he recks not where,  
But up and up above the ground,  
And on and on, and round and round,  
Till, tired, but at his own desire,  
He stays his sudden flight of fire,  
And floats and sways and checks his fall,  
Then drops, a tiny feathered ball,  
His notes of passion spent and spilled,  
And all his eager quiverings stilled,  
Down from his height, and so retrieves  
His strength amid his sheltering leaves.  
No fierce desire for freedom stirred  
The little cage-born British bird.  
Comfort he had, and soon resigned  
The native wildness of his mind ;  
And, still contracting to his cage,  
Forgot his ancient heritage,

His sires' untrammelled life forgot,  
Forgot their airy flight, but not  
The gift that erst had marked them free,  
That kept him bound—their minstrelsy.  
He was his home's delight, and grew  
To love his master; and he knew  
His gentle mistress and her care,  
And kissed her lips and sang her fair.  
Gladys he loved, who served his needs,  
And Doris with her freight of seeds;  
And oft he shook his trembling tongue  
With note on note divinely strung,  
Intent to greet in glad surprise  
Sweet Cicely of the shining eyes.  
And he was manumitted too  
From his dear cage, and lit and flew  
Out and about through all the room's  
Expanse, a flash of yellow plumes.  
Perched on a chair he would prolong  
His pure ecstatic burst of song,  
Then seek his master's hand, and then  
Hop meekly to his cage again.

• . . . .  
They took him down one summer's day,  
And bore him, cage and all, away,  
Far from his loved familiar home  
To England's verge and o'er the foam.  
Within the Custom-house the crowd  
Was striving, jostling, talking loud:  
Some talked in Anglo-French, and some  
Talked English—nobody was dumb.

The porters of that seaport town  
Banged each his load of luggage down ;  
Worn travellers, fumbling at the locks,  
Opened a trunk, a bag, a box ;  
Costumed officials barred a path  
To women volatile with wrath ;  
And boys were darting here and there,  
And all was chaos and despair—  
When on that crowd, in heat immersed,  
Three clear cool notes of music burst.  
A moment's pause, and then it thrilled  
In one triumphant swell that filled  
The shed our throng was pent within :—  
Oh, how it seemed to pierce the din  
With rapier thrusts of melody ;  
The porters half forgot their fee,  
And all the noise died down and seemed  
Asleep, while still the bird-voice streamed  
In sudden twists, in quivering twirls,  
In rippling rows of liquid pearls,  
Gushing, as in a thirsty land  
A fountain splashes on the sand.  
For a short space no sound was heard  
But Cicely's little captive bird,  
Who sang as if his heart must break,  
With mere excess of trill and shake,  
And flung the challenge of his notes  
Defiant down the Frenchmen's throats.

He ceased ; the clamour rose again,  
And so at last we caught the train.

## PEGGY, A PONY.

MUCH have we talked of Juno, of Rollo and of Roy,  
But little Shetland Peggy is now our only joy ;  
And all the great St Bernards they eye with jealous air  
Our latest toy and treasure, the tiny Shetland mare.

No dog can well imagine—and dogs can think, of course—  
That any shape so dwarfish can truly be a horse.  
They deem her in their wisdom a sort of canine Gog,  
And contemplate with anger so very large a dog.

But Peggy, dauntless Peggy, has wrinkled up her nose ;  
She charges down on Rollo, she tramples on his toes ;  
And, if he sniffs too closely, the little vixen jibs,  
And, lo, a pair of hooflets strike thudding on his ribs.

Yet is she kind and gentle : the children stroke her side ;  
They pull her shaggy top-knot and clamour for a ride ;  
Diminutive but fearless, she lets herself be fed  
By little human Shetlands who cluster round her head.

Then see her in her harness how well she plays her part :  
Her driver sure should drag her while she sits in the cart.  
But plucky little Peggy makes nothing of her load,  
And like a clock her footfalls go ticking down the road.

Ten hands the lady measures—just that and nothing more :  
It's only forty inches to Rollo's thirty-four.  
I think we'll try them tandem, and show a turn of speed  
With Peggy as the wheeler and Rollo in the lead.

In Fairyland, I warrant, are many such as she,  
Or tethered to a poppy or stabled in a tree.  
As Queen Titania's palfrey she might have kicked her  
heels,  
Or drawn in Court processions a nautilus on wheels.

Unclipped, undesecrated, her coat is like a mat ;  
One wild rough mane her crest is : no weight could keep  
it flat.  
Her liquid eye is friendly, and, oh, I never knew  
A mortal eye more darkly unfathomably blue.

Yet on her peat-moss litter, to luxury resigned,  
She seems to catch the echoes of every stormy wind ;  
And, sad but uncomplaining, she seems to see the foam  
Tossed from the angry breakers that beat about her home.

For, ah, she must remember that home so wild and free  
Amid the wind-swept islets that stud the northern sea,  
Where late she snuffed the tempests and heard the curlews  
call,  
Before she knew a bridle or moped within a stall.

## DUKE, A DRAY-HORSE.

ONLY a horse ! But who can well decide  
How much was lost when Duke, the dray-horse, died ?  
Mildness inborn and honesty untaught,  
Majestic patience and sagacious thought,  
Faith that endured and love that knew no end—  
Such was old Duke, our huge and dappled friend.  
Oft have I seen him pacing on his way,  
Single, or paired with Paladin, the bay,  
Now on the level, calm and debonair,  
His shaggy forelock tossing in the air,  
Now, his neck stretched, his breathing quick and deep,  
With pointed forehoofs clawing up the steep,  
Till, when the top was won, he'd pause and seem  
A mammoth spectre in a cloud of steam.  
The little children marked with wondering eyes  
His swelling muscles, his gigantic size,  
Forsook their sports to flock about his knees,  
And pat and smooth him while he stood at ease.  
Then Duke, refreshed and resolute and gay,  
Leaned to his work once more and drew the dray.  
How firm his footfalls, while the noisy load  
Came rumbling after, struck the echoing road !

How, without effort, mightily he moved,  
Joyous and proud and grand and unreproved ;  
For all he knew of whips was this in brief :—  
They sometimes cracked and sometimes flicked a leaf.  
Let others flinch—he could not be afraid  
On whose broad back no lash was ever laid.  
And when at eve within his stall he stood,  
Massive but tired, and munched his simple food,  
His body cool, his legs washed down and dried,  
His honest forehead in his headstall tied,  
While on the air the rhythmic sound was borne  
Of steady teeth all grinding at the corn—  
If, on his rounds, his well-loved driver came,  
Patted his flank and softly called his name,  
Straight, making room, he shifted on his bed,  
And pricked his ears and lifted up his head,  
And, strong in love as in his gesture meek,  
Laid his soft nose against the man's rough cheek.  
Still, when the slow withdrawing step was heard,  
He looked and mutely asked another word ;  
Then the sound faded and the horse was fain  
With one deep sigh to turn and munch again.

Next to this friend, throughout his hours of rest  
One little comrade always pleased him best,  
A stunted cat, a cat so inky-black  
She seemed a blot upon his good grey back,  
Where oft in meditation rapt she lay,  
Kneading his skin, and purred the time away.  
Nor did she fail to bring her kittens all  
For Duke's approval to the straw-laid stall :

Kind in her purpose, in her method rough,  
She seized her vocal offspring by the scruff,  
And laid them one by one, an offering meet,  
In anxious triumph at her playmate's feet,  
Who looked and snuffed and wondered what they were,  
And gazed again, but never hurt a hair.

True to the end and staunch, whate'er befell,  
Farewell, strong body, gentle heart farewell !  
Service and zeal and kindness and sense—  
You gave them all, nor craved a recompense ;  
But, proud to own and quick to understand  
The trifling tribute of a flattering hand,  
Toiled at your task with undivided mind,  
Grateful for this :—if only men were kind.  
So if I let my pleasant fancies stray  
Beyond the limit of your earthly day,  
Grand as in life, old friend, I see you stand  
Cropping sweet clover in a happy land,  
Where no hills tire, no granite gives you pain,  
But grass grows deep and all is level plain,  
With spreading trees to make a green retreat,  
And rippling streams to cool your unshod feet ;  
And not a fly, howe'er the heat increase,  
To move your tail or mar your perfect peace.

## A DITTY OF CHAMPAGNE.

THIS is the fellow for strut and swagger :—  
With his tilted sword and his rakish dagger,  
And his breast as gay as a herald's tabard,  
And his cloak caught up on the long sword's scabbard,  
And the fine hose fashioned for summer weather,  
And the cap aflame with its red cock's feather,  
And the doublet slashed into purple gashes,  
And a fluttering hint of his gold-edged sashes,  
And the long red shoes with their pointed toes,  
Out and about and back he goes ;  
Swaggers, his hair all crisp and curled,  
And the ends of his saucy moustaches twirled,  
Free to the edge of the happy world.  
And hark to the echoes rolling, rolling  
To the song that the beggar's voice is trolling :—  
“ All good fellows of each degree,  
Hurry and join my company !  
Show me your souls and I'll give them wings,  
Crown them, sceptre them, make them Kings.  
Roistering, flashing, and all zig-zagging,  
Off we go with our tongues a-wagging ;  
And each of our band, when he meets another,  
Salutes him straight as his heart's own brother.

Take but a look, and, your minds on fire,  
Each of you owns his dear desire ;  
Laughs for it, hugs it, always sought it,  
But never found it and never bought it,  
Until, with a smile that pierced right through him,  
And a wave of my hand, I gave it to him.”  
Then swift he summons to meet your need  
A curveting flame-eyed chestnut steed ;  
And before you have time to think or stammer,  
The world flies by that his hoof-beats hammer,  
And you on his back, with your knees set tight,  
And your being a blaze of golden light,  
Off and away with the steed’s mad flight,  
Reckless of all that the rush may bring,  
Off you clatter and on you swing.  
Back rolls memory’s curtain, back,  
And it’s gold, pure gold, that was once mere black.  
Golden visions of golden hours  
Spent in a garden of rich red flowers,  
Where warm to your throbbing breast you fold  
A wonderful girl with a heart of gold.

This is the fellow for me, and I, Sir,  
I wouldn’t change him for King or Kaiser.  
Wherever his swaggering steps go free  
He may count me one of his company.

## A CANTO OF CLARET.

*To W. J. J.*

ON an evening—oh, it was long ago  
In the years when life had a rosy glow,  
When each black cloud, though we never feared it,  
Yielded and faded the more we neared it,  
Like a thin wan mist by the sun's rays scattered ;  
And nothing at all in the wide world mattered,  
Nothing but joy and the right to choose it,  
And the strength of our arms and the right to use it ;  
When gold, not ingot or coin or bar,  
But better and richer and rarer far,  
Was ours, not toiled for or snatched for or groped for,  
In the friends we had and the friends we hoped for,  
All of them tested and staunch and truthful,  
And all, like ourselves, immensely youthful—  
On a certain evening in mid-November  
We sat and we talked—do you remember ?  
And all of a sudden, neat and thin,  
A third to our party came gliding in ;  
Neat and thin and sedate and prim,  
With a fine smooth cap, and a dress so trim  
That the least rough movement might disarrange it ;

And a look—but I didn't wish to change it—  
Fixed and sober and cool and quiet,  
With never a hint of noise or riot ;  
So calm and gentle that, but for staring,  
We might have missed when a fire came flaring  
Forth from his eyes, as swift and bright  
As the sparks from a horse's hoofs at night,  
When the road gleams out by his gallop fired—  
So quickly it flashed and so expired.  
Then he looked us here and he looked us there,  
And I thought, thought I, I must speak him fair.  
He's a gentleman, every inch, that's clear ;  
So let him be welcome and sit down here ;  
And if he can talk, so much the better :  
Right gladly I'll listen, and be his debtor  
For a story told, and, unless I'm cheated,  
It's bound to be good—so I said, “Be seated ;  
Be seated, friend, at your utmost ease,  
And tell us your story, if you please.”  
So our friend sat down, and his voice came slow,  
But it wasn't a story at all, you know,  
For it didn't begin, and it hadn't a middle,  
And there wasn't the least little plot to unriddle,  
And you couldn't say, when the voice diminished  
And paused at last, that the tale was finished,  
Coffined and clamped and buried deep  
In the place where the good and the bad tales sleep,  
And never to wake again, you'd pray,  
Till the last trump roused it at Judgment Day.  
For, although he spoke, it wasn't a story,  
But a blaze of light with a trail of glory,

A dragon of fire with all his joints  
Gemmed with a circle of ruby points,  
His breath like a flaming exhalation,  
And his wings one emerald coruscation,  
Fanning the sky with a noise of thunder—  
A shape that a man might see and wonder,  
With his matter of fact and his logic banished,  
Whence it appeared and whither it vanished ;  
And now it seemed like the burst sonorous  
Of a wonderful magical ancient chorus :  
Not a roundelay for a festal dance meant,  
But an air with a most divine entrancement,  
That lifted you up and made you seem  
Like a floating shade in a happy dream,  
All thoughts gone that your heart offended,  
Your strivings over, your struggles ended ;  
Nothing left that could now remind you  
Of tempests and tossings far behind you ;  
Envy stifled and anger muffled,  
And, born in their place, a calm unruffled,  
A marvellous peaceful stretch immense,  
Beyond the limits of sight or sense,  
Smooth as glass, but with just a swell, too,  
A long low swell that you rose and fell to,  
With the music to lull you and give you the swing of it,  
And you on its surface the one lord and king of it.  
And then, it seemed, with a kind of shake up  
You'd come to yourself and start and wake up,  
And see in a valley green and gay  
Brown-faced maidens and boys at play,  
Full in the sun on a happy day,

Laughing and singing and footing and frisking it,  
The boys for a kiss and the girls all risking it,  
Their eyes so bright that you couldn't but love them,  
And a shepherd stretched on the bank above them,  
Fingering deftly and blowing neatly  
On his oaten pipe till it sounded sweetly  
With notes that a wood-nymph might have sung  
In the pleasant years when the world was young.  
And, lo ! you saw with your own two eyes—  
Saw it yourself without surprise,  
For indeed it seemed a sight to be glad about—  
You saw yourself in the thick of the gad-about,  
Playing a game that you seemed quite pat in,  
With a girl to help you who whispered Latin,  
While you whispered love, or its Latin analogy,  
Soft in the ear of your Phyllis or Lalage.  
And next, like a joyous bird sublime,  
You were poised aloft on the winds of Time,  
With sun upon sun in the sky to show you  
The wide world plain to your sight below you ;  
And you knew what it meant and how it had risen,  
Cause and effect, from its cramping prison,  
When first the marvellous word was spoken,  
And the bars were burst and the shackles broken,  
And, elate with the ordered freedom gained for it,  
The globe swung out on the course ordained for it.

And still our friend was telling his tale,  
Talking at ease till the light came pale  
Through the rents and chinks of the window curtain ;  
And (this much is sure though the rest's uncertain)

The room was cold, and the lamp was flaring,  
And you and I were awake and staring,  
Dazed with the tale that we both had heard,  
And echoing still with the man's last word,  
And thinking him still on the self-same spot there—  
Till we rubbed our eyes and, lo ! he was not there.

## LA BÉNÉDICTINE.

THE Normandy coast is a pleasant coast,  
For never, I know, could sapphire boast  
A blue more clear than the sea boasts there  
When the winds are hushed and the sky is fair,  
And, tricked like a girl whose smile enhances  
The glow of her eyes, a ripple dances,  
Whispering, murmuring, lulling, cooing,  
Withdrawing awhile and again pursuing,  
And striving still with a laugh to reach  
Over the rocks to the pebbly beach.  
And up and up from the grey old strand,  
Green, fresh, beautiful folds of land,  
Dotted with houses, thatched or slated,  
Coil to the top till their sides are mated  
In a shimmering glory of cornfields spread,  
Like a cover laid on a royal bed,  
With the impudent poppies to speckle and prank them,  
And the green, cool patches of trees to flank them.  
On either hand of the coombes you'll see  
Chalk-cliffs jutting defiantly.  
Sheer, since the march of time began,  
Is the height, and not to be climbed by man.

He must hate his life who would strive to win it,  
Though he glowed for the toil with his whole soul in it—  
Climbing warily, straining, gasping,  
His foot in a cleft, and his body rasping,  
His hand on the grip for a flint to hitch to,  
And his bruised knee set in a shallow niche, too,  
He might rise for a hundred feet or so,  
And still have double the height to go.  
And so he might pause on a narrow ledge of it,  
And strain his eyes for the topmost edge of it,  
And rise again to the task that drew him—  
Till the torn hands loosed, and the sheer cliff threw him.

And Fécamp town is a pleasant town :—  
If you come by land, as you first look down  
From the winding road and so catch sight of it,  
You may think it gloomy and make too light of it ;  
For there's not much colour and hardly a spark in it  
But its sombre slate-roofs deaden and darken it,  
Making it look like a dead survival  
Of days when it shone with scarce a rival ;  
When the trumpet called to its heights and valleys  
To gather their hosts and man their galleys,  
With their lances flashing, their standards flaunting,  
And their morioned lords all strutting and vaunting  
How, with the fierce bold men that ringed 'em,  
They could shatter a throne or set up a kingdom.  
But Fécamp's changed and it's quiet and old,  
And the blood in its veins runs thin and cold ;  
And very sedate and grey—it's there  
That I met my friend—is the old *Place Thiers*.

A fine old fellow he was and stout,  
Amply bellied and rounded out ;  
French in the hands (it's the sort of a trick you'll hate  
If you're British and bluff) that he used to gesticulate ;  
French in his eyes and their twinkling shrewdness,  
French in his bow and his lack of rudeness ;  
French in his hair, in his smiling lips,  
French, in fact, to his finger tips.  
Not a limb of the fellow was frail or slender,  
And, oh, but his eye was brown and tender,  
Clear as a lake undisturbed by a tiny wave,  
And his skin had been browned by the sun and the briny  
wave.

And, lo, on his waistcoat, jingling-jangling  
With its bundle of seals, a chain hung dangling ;  
And one of them bore, cut deep in the gem on it,  
The mystical letters D, O and an M on it.

And I said to myself as he bowed, “ What a privilege  
To be bowed to and talked to by him ; 'tis a civil edge  
I'll keep on my tongue and talk back with sobriety,  
For I see by his air that he's used to Society.”

Then he shook my hand, and at once he bound me  
In meshes of silk that he threw around me,  
Meshes spun from his mouth and eyes ;  
And, trammelled thus, but without surprise,  
I felt unfettered and unimpeded,  
As though they were just the one thing needed  
With their promise of laughter and joy and of fun for me,  
Those meshes the cheery old Frenchman spun for me.

• • • • •

It didn't last long, our interview,  
But he told me many things rare and true  
In the old *Place Thiers* on a summer's day  
Before with a bow he slipped away ;  
It didn't last long, and that's my sorrow,  
But perhaps—who knows?—we may meet to-morrow,  
And maybe he'll bind me, that stout French spinner,  
As he bound me before, at lunch or at dinner.

## A CHRISTMAS BOWL.

OH, London's streets are a dismal sight  
If you wander about on a Christmas night ;  
The doors are barred and the blinds made trim,  
And the fronts of the houses are black and grim.  
I warrant there's plenty of laughter there,  
Jollity, jokes, and warmth to spare,  
With food in abundance and wine, no doubt,  
But it's all within while you stand without,  
And shiver and gaze and stamp and dream,  
And watch your breath as it goes in steam,  
Curling, lingering, floating, wreathing,  
And you wonder idly what keeps you breathing,  
And sending these ghosts of yourself to follow  
The vanishing ghosts that the dim mists swallow.  
So there I walked, and my thoughts were sinister  
As those of a—what shall I say ?—a Minister  
Who is chased by a loud-voiced Opposition  
From his pride of place and his high condition,  
While nobody marks him or heeds his wishes,  
And his foes fall-to on the loaves and fishes ;  
Or a Bishop, it may be, of this place or that place—  
No opulent See, and by no means a fat place—

Who, while he has trimmed and toiled and waited,  
Has seen no end of the rest translated,  
And himself grows lean in despair of a fatter See—  
So I walked till at last I came to Battersea.  
And there on the bridge I stood set high,  
And the river below went sliding by :  
Dark and gloomy and deep and old,  
With spears of light on its ebb a-shiver  
That broke its eddies with glints of gold,  
Solemnly slid the ancient river  
Between dark banks where the mist clung damp  
To the glittering serpent of lamp on lamp  
That trailed to the east where the moon hung low—  
Never was seen a larger or rougher ring—  
With her face all scarred and a brick-dust glow  
That served to set off her expression of suffering.  
Then after a minute I turned, and back  
I trudged and trudged with my thoughts still black ;  
And there, as I stolidly trudged, I knew  
That somebody else was trudging too.  
Faster I went, but I never outpaced him,  
So I set my teeth and I turned and faced him.  
I never saw a jollier sight  
Than my fellow-trudger that Christmas night :  
A pilot-jacket the man was wrapped in,  
And his eyes were gleaming with fun, and glancing  
Like a couple of fairies dancing, dancing ;  
And he looked like a storm-tossed old sea captain,  
With a face so battered by every weather  
That a man might meet from Penang to Porlock,  
That it made you just pull yourself together

And hitch your trousers and touch your forelock,  
As if, while still for the shore you hanker,  
You had got rowed out to a ship at anchor,  
You being at that time rated A.B.,  
With a roll in your walk like a two-year baby,  
And had climbed the ladder and stepped aboard her,  
With your ear cocked sharp for the Captain's order.  
Now where had I met the man? I knew  
He had never commanded a ship or crew;  
His face and his figure, I knew them well,  
But what was his name I couldn't tell.  
Stay, there was—"Tush" to myself I said,  
"It can't be he, for he's long been dead,  
Dead and buried this many a year,  
And Westminster Abbey had his bier,  
And Westminster Abbey's storied stones  
Are the vault that covers the great man's bones.  
But still there's a look in his face, a quip  
Of roguish spirits that haunt his lip,  
A tilt of his head with its bold, strong high brow,  
And a quick sharp trick of his lifted eyebrow—  
If it's not—but I know it's not, because  
Charles Dickens is dead"—*but, by Zeus, it was!*  
And, oh, what a joy to take his hand  
There in the street where he came and found me,  
Back, straight back from the shadow-land,  
And his glorious capturing smile thrown round me.  
Dickens, hurrah! he was back again—  
Back with his store of jovial laughter!  
Off went he; in his rushing train,  
I, all wonder, went rushing after.

He stopped at a house, made up his mind,  
Passed right into it, I behind ;  
I don't know whose and I can't say where,  
But well I know that a house stood there.  
And then like a flash we seemed to enter  
A great room fixed in the house's centre,  
Where, to judge by the table spread and lighted,  
An army of guests had been invited.  
But, when we were in and the big door thrust-to,  
I couldn't see any one else save us two.  
At the end of the table stood a bowl,  
A bowl built in like a landlord's fixture,  
And into it swift he poured his soul,  
And he filled it full, and he stirred the mixture  
With a business air till there came an aroma  
Better than rum, lemon, water and cinnamon,  
That had roused old Rip from his state of coma  
With a leap like an eel's from the board that you skin  
him on.  
And oh, but the magical air was humming  
With the cheeriest songs I used to know ;  
And in through the door old friends kept coming,  
Dear companions of long ago.  
Dear old gardens I used to roam in,  
Dear old voices I thought were lost,  
Dear old scenes that I had my home in,  
Jolly old days of sun or frost,  
Where every day had a bright to-morrow,  
And nobody dreamt of pain or sorrow ;  
Childhood's merriment, childhood's noise,  
Boyhood's frolic and jokes and joys ;

And full in the midst a Christmas tree,  
Loaded and lit as they used to be,—  
These sights I saw and these sounds I heard  
While the bubbling mixture was stirred and stirred.  
Till—lo, with a flash that leaves you darkling,  
Out went the vision gay and sparkling,  
And the bright hall turned to a gloomy, dead room—  
And I was alone in my own dull bedroom.

## THE HAPPY HILLS OF LEA.

Oh, there's sunshine on the happy hills, the happy hills of Lea,  
And there's freshness in the valleys where they part to meet the sea ;  
And there's laughter in the waving trees and laughter in the air,  
And there's rest for men and women who may chance to wander there,  
And I hear a voice that whispers, "Oh, it's there that you would be ;  
Turn your steps, you weary toiler, to the happy hills of Lea."

Many friends I loved have gone there ; I shall see them once again,  
When the hills rise bright before me as I trudge across the plain,  
And my feet will spring to meet them and my weary heart will leap,  
As I hear, awake, their voices that have cheered me in my sleep.

They will come to bid me welcome and they'll stretch  
their hands to me,  
When I touch the shining borders of the happy hills of Lea.

Oh, I often thought of starting when the clouds were  
hanging low,  
When my hands were worn with working and my feet  
were dragging slow,  
When the light of life was sinking that had flashed so  
bright and gay.  
Then, I thought, I'll stay no longer, but I'll start at break  
of day ;  
I will drop my load and leave it, and I'll wander fair and  
free  
To a peaceful, sunny haven in the happy hills of Lea.

But there's something always holds me, something presses  
on my heart,  
When the distant voices call me, and I never can depart ;  
Something toilsome, something weary, but I know it must  
be done  
Ere I start, my labour ended, for the haven in the sun.  
Yet some day, without my thinking, I shall leave it all  
and see  
Far away, but growing nearer, all the happy hills of Lea.

## INTER AMICOS.

YE happy sunny days that were,  
 And oh ye comrades blithe and fair,  
 With laughter frank and debonair  
     And hair so crisp and curly ;  
 And thou, beloved and ancient town,  
 Where once I wore a cap and gown,  
 And saw the friends I loved go down  
     Degree'd, but ah too early !

Myself I lingered ; yet for me  
 The hour of parting had to be :  
 I took thy gifts, and gracelessly  
     Forgot to thank the giver,  
 And went at length ; and now a glow  
 Lies round each well-known scene, and so  
 My fancy makes e'en Camus flow  
     A broad and shining river !

And all thy Courts and narrow streets  
 Seem fashioned into grave retreats,  
 And all thy Houses turned to seats  
     Of piety and quiet ;

Yet, mixed with these sedater joys  
Still, in my mind, I hear the noise  
And share the sports of eager boys,  
And all their cheerful riot.

Thou too, her sister, set apart  
For high-souled deeds and dreams of art,  
Thou, Oxford, dost possess my heart  
Scarce less than she, who brought me  
Safe from the barren tracts of earth  
To fields aflame with sun and mirth,  
And gave me eyes to see thy worth,  
And thy great worship taught me.

Cambridge and Oxford ! and ye friends,  
Brothers whose love can make amends  
For loss of love, whose presence lends  
A blessing to dejection !  
And ye, whose cherished memory still  
With living warmth outlasts the chill  
Of chance and change, whose faces fill  
My thoughts with pure affection,

Grant me your spirit ; let me find  
Deep-stored within my faithful mind  
The gifts ye showered, unresigned  
To Time who fain would grasp them.  
He turns his glass and speeds the sands  
Where ambushed at our side he stands,—  
He cannot fetter your kind hands,  
Oh friends, and I can clasp them.

And each dear spirit-shape whose face  
Bears ever the enchanted grace  
Of youth, ye friends whose earthly race

Long long ago was finished,  
Ye will not think I do you wrong  
If here and there with jest and song  
I chase an hour or two along,  
Nor deem my love diminished.

Dear Ben, how often stretched at ease  
We lay beneath our Thames's trees,  
Or, tired of lazy ways like these,  
Set out and rowed together !  
How oft at evening have we sat  
And talked of this and dreamed of that—  
Of books or boats, of gun or bat,  
Green fields or purple heather !

I used to think of you, and grieve  
To think no thinking could reprieve  
The doom that bade you take your leave

Where low I saw you lying ;  
But now I think of you, and while  
I still must grieve, I can beguile  
My sorrow with a wistful smile  
That lightens all my sighing.

So let us toast the coming year  
With all its hope of happy cheer,  
And pledge the friends our hearts hold dear  
May no ill chance distress them !

The present friends, and those who stray  
Afar, not less beloved than they,  
May Heaven be with them on their way—  
Our absent friends, God bless them !

Nor may it be by death denied  
That from the bourne where they abide  
Once more we summon to our side  
    The lost familiar faces ;  
And cheat our senses with the sight  
Of friends restored to life and light,  
As though the silence and the night  
    Had spared them to their places.

## THE FANCY-DRESS DINNER.

*To G. D. R.*

DEAR GEORGE, we saw the New Year in,  
A fancy-costumed party.  
We made a fairly cheerful din,  
And all were very hearty.  
Our number totalled up to ten :  
Five couples paired and flirted ;  
For half (by day) were trousered men,  
And half of us were skirted.

Columbia, with her red stripes on,  
Renewed our ancient quarrel  
With hints at tea and Lexington,  
And Bunker's deathless laurel.  
No threats of ours availed to still  
That spangled lady's rattle :  
She mentioned how she kept the hill,  
Although we won the battle.

She tossed aloft her starry head,  
And all her jeers enlisted  
To show how eagles should be spread,  
And lions' tails be twisted.

All round she stinted us of praise,  
And, when the stars were paling,  
Her stars and stripes still full ablaze,  
We left Columbia hailing.

The Prince came in a four-wheeled fly—  
His Cinderella brought him.  
Judged by the homage of her eye,  
A perfect Prince she thought him.  
To each—so deep they were in love—  
The other seemed a ripper :  
It was a case of hand and glove  
As well as foot and slipper.

Archie became a turbaned Sheik  
While Claude put on a laced coat :  
His wig was white, and pink his cheek,  
And pink his satin waistcoat.  
At Versailles in the old régime  
His curls he might have nodded :  
He was, in fact, a Dresden dream  
Delightfully embodied.

Di Vernon brought a hunting-crop,  
And, oh, she looked entrancing ;  
A County Sheriff led the hop  
When couples took to dancing.  
Miss D. went off—I cursed my stars  
To find the girl refuse me—  
And tripped it with a son of Mars,  
Herself a pretty *mousm *.

Our feet had scarce a moment's ease ;  
We couldn't keep our hands still,  
Until Miss D., the Japanese,  
Ping-ponged us to a standstill.  
Then Sheila traced our palms, and so  
Fulfilled her rôle as gipsy ;  
And all of us were cheerful, though  
The cake alone was tipsy.

And thus we saw the Old Year fade—  
I wish you had been here, George :  
A year begun without your aid  
Seems only half a year, George.  
P'raps, when the months have had their spin,  
A doubled lot may guide you  
To come and see a New Year in—  
With Mrs George beside you ?

## INSTANS SENECTA.

DEAR JACK, what's this? My word upon it,  
A bee is buzzing in your bonnet.  
These solemn words, precise and slow,  
Are not the little lad I know,  
So young, so cheerfully addressed  
To frolic fun and laughing jest;  
So careless what the days may bring,  
If but himself may have his fling;  
So apt to pour his scorn on those  
Who ponderously prate and prose  
Of age that weighs and care that clings,  
And all the other hateful things  
That mar the brow and bend the back  
Of some—but never come to Jack.

How is it, Jack, that you resent  
My little birthday compliment?  
“At twenty-five,” you write, “a man  
Forgets his birthdays if he can.  
With twice twelve years all stowed behind him,  
It's hardly tactful to remind him  
That, lo! a twenty-fifth is gone,  
And still old Time keeps pegging on.

Once, long ago, I looked on birthdays  
As unalloyed delightful mirth-days.  
The candles on the cake, that mark  
One's score of years, seemed just a lark.  
Would that they had remained the same—  
But every year another came ;  
And still, while swift my youth was going,  
The hateful number kept a-growing,  
Until—I heard the cook declare it—  
No merely mortal cake would bear it.  
That stamped me old ; so spare me, pray,  
Allusions to my natal day.”

Poor Jack ! But, ah, I can remember  
When life to me seemed all December.  
There shone no sun to make me warm,  
But all was cloud and gathering storm,  
A bleak grey sky, a prospect drear,  
And over all a voice rang clear  
Through wind and rain and sleet and snow :  
“Gone is your youth, gone long ago !”  
It was, as I recall, the time  
When life was flushing in its prime.  
Cambridge had done with me, no doubt,  
But then she had not flung me out :  
Degree'd I left her—'tis no rare case ;  
Another's name was on my staircase ;  
And in my comfortable room  
Another dwelt, and heard the broom  
And all the matutinal stir  
Of Mrs J., the bedmaker.

To him henceforth she would devote  
Her widow's curse of anecdote,  
And use for him, but not for me,  
A tongue that wagged incessantly.  
In short, I was a fresh B.A.,  
And should have been, but wasn't, gay.  
Plunged into London's flooded stream  
I felt that I had dreamed my dream.  
To gloom and fancied age I clung—  
And yet I was superbly young.

And now, good luck, it makes me smile  
To hear you use my ancient style.  
Heaven help you, Jack, your clear blue eye  
Gives all such fancy-talk the lie.  
Go to, 'tis but a waking pain ;  
You'll fall asleep and dream again,  
And (in your dreams) you'll wander free  
Through life and all its pageantry,  
And follow still the fleeting glory  
Until—but that's another story.  
And now, if you'll withhold your stricture,  
I'll dip my brush and paint a picture ;  
So, Jack, attend, and try to suit your  
Imagination to the future.  
Double your years, that makes 'em fifty :—  
Behold a housewife neat and thrifty—  
She knows his tempers through and through—  
Stands by her portly man—that's you.  
Your little girls, two dainty trippers,  
Bring you their gifts of socks and slippers.

Your boy—he stroked his College boat  
And hopes to wear your old blue coat—  
Forbears awhile your education,  
And offers his congratulation,  
And hints, at ease, the cool young sinner,  
At birthday fare and fizz for dinner !  
And you, I fancy, seem to find  
A birthday fairly to your mind.  
You chaff the lad, and lightly touch  
On boys who seem to know too much.  
“ A youth to-day,” you’ll laugh, “ is rather  
More aged than his ancient father.  
And, oh, forgive me, but—ahem !—  
Those Cambridge bills, Sir—what of them ? ”

So, Jack, repent : why, man alive,  
You’ve just begun at twenty-five !

## AT ANCHOR.

WE had cleft the salt sea bravely, but the wind went out  
and died ;  
And I heard the sails a-flapping as we drifted with the  
tide ;  
With the swaying masts above us drawing curves across  
the blue,  
And the long smooth swell to swing us—and it's then I  
thought of you !

For the wind it died at evening, and it left us rolling free,  
Rolling free and loose and lazy in the hollows of the sea ;  
And the sea-birds came to mock us :—“Who are these  
that lie at rest  
In the ocean’s easy cradle while we hurry on our quest ?”

Then they gathered, half a hundred, while we heard their  
password ring,  
And without a splash or flutter they were off upon the  
wing :  
Fifty cormorants a-scudding in a swift and level flight  
Scarce a foot above the surface, till they settled out of  
sight.

But the wise old gull kept with us, and his flight was never fast,  
But sedate and poised and sober, as he circled round the mast,  
As he circled close and closer, and anon went soaring high  
With a flash of snowy glory on the azure of the sky.

“Look alive, my men, be ready !”—’twas the captain singing clear—

“We might drift and get no further if we tried for half a year ;  
Though the harbour’s close and handy, it might just as well be far,  
For we draw twelve feet of water, and it’s ten above the bar.”

Then we folded in our pinions, and the masts were stark and plain,  
And away we swung our anchor with a rattle of the chain ;  
And the night spread out her kirtle, and the stars came peeping through,  
And the shoreward lights were gleaming—and it’s then I thought of you !

For I saw you by the river—it was just a waking dream—  
On the grassy banks that fledge it, and we walked beside the stream ;  
Oh, it’s then I thought and wondered if you spared a thought for me,  
You on land for me at anchor in the hollows of the sea.

## BACK TO "THE BACKS."

THE Avenue of Trinity ! How sweet it were to pace  
Beneath a May day sky once more that dear familiar  
place ;  
Or hang upon the Bridge again, and watch with friendly  
eye  
The gay canoes and pleasure-boats that merrily go by.

Or, stretched upon the river's bank, that sunny slope of  
grass,  
To let the flying minutes go, nor heed them as they pass ;  
An easy book for company, and, though the dons may fret,  
To puff, while porters prowl afar, the lawless cigarette.

To hear the voice of friends who pass, and hail you as  
they go—  
"Get up, get up, you lazy loon ! It's time to come and  
row."  
Oh, early, unforgotten friends, I cannot praise — can  
you ?—  
The fate that plucked our hands apart and tore our lives  
in two.

And then the fleet of racing ships to Grassy and the locks,  
The eight men toiling heartily, the eager little cox ;  
The bodies moved in unison, the murmur of the slides,  
The "Five, you're late," or "Four, you're short," from  
somebody who rides.

The silent, dogged earnestness of all the panting crew,  
The strong beginning swiftly gripped, the finish driven  
through,  
The rattle of the oars and, ah, sometimes the sound  
sublime  
Of one who cheered, " Swing out, my lads, you're doing  
record time ! "

How fresh and cool the evenings were—like those who  
spent them then  
In frank and boyish cheerfulness, our self-created men.  
Ah, would that I were back with those who keep in  
Cambridge town  
The old tradition ever young of life in cap and gown !

But we must walk in Fleet Street now, or perch upon a  
'bus ;  
No avenue of rustling trees makes melody for us—  
Yet memories of grassy slopes and sunny hours relax  
The minds of men in London pent who never see the  
Backs.

## HAPPY SHADES IN COLLEGE.

*To the Master of Trinity.*

IN from the narrow winding street  
 We pass as we were wont to pass,  
 Avoiding still with timorous feet  
 The level lawns of sacred grass.  
 And, even as happy shades might sport  
 Through a bright space of storied tombs,  
 We saunter through the grey old Court,  
 And mark, each one his ancient rooms.

The gates are there on either hand,  
 Their niches crowned with founder-kings ;  
 Still with a pensive murmur bland  
 The ripple of the fountain sings.  
 Yes ! peopled by another race  
 And alien to our hopes and fears,  
 It is, it is, the dear old place,  
 Unchanged through all the changing years.

Lo ! shadows of our buried prime,  
 Not as we were but as we are,  
 With all our heavy load of time,  
 Master, we come to you from far.

A gathered troop of wandering ghosts  
Caught up and newly called from sleep,  
To you and your array of hosts  
Back from the vanished past we creep.

If, as we throng into the Hall,  
Our steps, that erst were light as air,  
With labouring gait sedately fall ;  
And if you note our grizzling hair ;  
And if the word we fain would speak  
Dies on our lips and we are dumb ;  
And if the tear is on our cheek,  
Master, forgive, since we are come.

We, who were once imagined men  
Too gay to guard our fleeting joy,  
At your behest we come again,  
Our minds reversed, to play the boy.  
And while we still prolong the night  
Intent to make the hours creep slow,  
Jealous and in our own despite  
We feel the treasured moments go.

• . . . .  
But one who from a window leant,  
(May Heaven forgive the graceless youth :  
No harm that fresh-faced fellow meant,  
But, ah, he spoke a bitter truth.)  
He smiled, he opened wondering eyes  
And called a friend—"This sight *is* queer !  
What brings," he said with some surprise,  
"This crowd of fogeys trooping here?"

He could not chill our glowing hearts :—  
When, each his boyhood's friends among,  
Our shades replayed their ancient parts,  
We felt, we knew that we were young.  
And, ere we pass, our meed of thanks  
Shall to our hosts be duly paid :  
We lived a day—the Stygian banks  
Reclaim their own, and we must fade.

AD GRANTANOS.<sup>1</sup>

You ask a word or two in verse—  
 I cannot much commend you ;  
 Yet take, for better or for worse,  
 The humble lines I send you.  
 From Granta's groves of Academe  
 I draw my inspiration ;  
 And she herself shall be my theme,  
 Her smiles my exculpation.

I wonder if they still possess,  
 Those groves serene and hoary,  
 Their fresh but ancient loveliness,  
 Their visionary glory.  
 What dream-shapes dance before your eyes—  
 Full well of old I knew them—  
 Removing still the golden prize  
 The faster you pursue them ?

Of late I spent an evening there ;  
 When shadows fell I feared less :  
 In sunlight I should hardly dare  
 To face a throng so beardless,

<sup>1</sup> Written for the "Old Contributors' Number" of 'The Granta,' the Cambridge undergraduates' journal.

So planned, each one, to play the King,  
And, since I must be truthful,  
So very sure of everything,  
And so sublimely youthful.

They say you still row steadily ;  
Men talk of Grylls and Taylor :  
They seem by all accounts to be  
A sturdy type of sailor.  
For days long past *my* thoughts grow warm,  
When, by ambition spurred on,  
I found the mould of rowing form  
In Hockin and in Gurdon.

And, though the Cam be dull and slow,  
I am not of its scorers ;  
Fain would I still swing out and row  
Round those unending corners.  
Too old for such aquatic feats,  
I envy while I smile at  
E'en those who pad their painful seats  
With squares of "Pontius Pilate."

While we to all authorities  
Were merely humble suitors,  
You deal, I hear, in lordly ease  
With Masters, Deans, and Tutors.  
And, if in some permitted row  
A man should grow too sprightly,  
Your Proctor makes a lower bow,  
And fines him more politely.

Idyllic bliss ! it makes me proud  
To think of men combining  
In peace with Dons who cast a cloud  
Made up of silver lining.  
On us, I fear, the life might pall,  
So pleased were we with factions :  
And yet our days of gate and haul  
Were not without attractions.

What joy to think that you should come  
To look on Dons as brothers  
A tidy lot I've known, and some  
Were pleasanter than others.  
Remembering these I would not fan  
Resentment's dying embers—  
I, who have been a Cambridge man  
For twenty-eight Novembers.

No doubt you urge your friendly strife  
On higher planes than we did.  
We tried to live the perfect life,  
But few of us succeeded.  
What pleased us then might anger you ;  
You'd vote our jests a bore now.  
We thought we knew a thing or two ;  
Of course, you know a score now.

But still the end is much the same,  
Howe'er you may defy it ;  
Three years or four you have for fame,  
And then you must good-bye it.

No prayers avail to stay the shears  
The Fury wields, and straightway  
Her band of victims disappears  
From Bridge, and Court, and Gateway.

So from your higher ampler spheres  
Look down, and, oh ! be gracious  
To us who wore our gowns in years  
Less adequately spacious.  
Your turn must come to be afraid  
Of that abhorred Fury  
Who dogged our steps in King's Parade,  
The Lane, and Petty Cury.

## TO PHYLLIS IN CAMBRIDGE.

*From her Uncle at Home.*

DEAR PHYLLIS, as you go the round  
 From youth to youth in Hall and College,  
 Hear their unworldly laughter sound,  
 And marvel at their worldly knowledge ;  
 Your Uncle's hortatory pen  
 (While you do all a May-maid may do)  
 Reminds you there are other men  
 Who once looked just as fresh as they do.

That envied youth, *e.g.*, whose hair  
 Curls round a head like that of Hermes,  
 Who steps it proudly with an air  
 Of graceful strength combined with firm ease,  
 Whose chest is full, whose back is flat,  
 Whose lip is like the bow of Cupid—  
 Your Uncle was a man like that,  
 Though now he's old and bent and stupid.

And when the hero takes his seat—  
 Queer seats our modern oarsmen sit on !—  
 And in his light ship heads the fleet  
 That races round the bend at Ditton,

“There”—while his efforts prove the nerve  
That suits his reckless sink-or-swim age—  
“There rows,” my Phyllis will observe,  
“My Uncle—or, at least, his image.”

When 'mid the music of the dance,  
Moved by the ecstasy that wakes it,  
The fiery youth perceives his chance,  
Perceives it well, and swiftly takes it,  
Believe it, Phyllis, if you can,  
While half-rebuked your hand he presses—  
I, too, was just as keen a man  
Long, long ago for dark recesses.

But now I sit sedate at home,  
And sigh for all my vanished ardour ;  
I let my pretty Phyllis roam,  
And send her watchful Aunt to guard her.  
She, too, will like her “ May ” in June,  
But mildly, since her years are riper ;  
She'll let our Phyllis call the tune,  
And she (or I) will pay the piper.

## THE PERFECT OAR.

ONCE on a dim and dream-like shore,  
    Half seen, half recollected,  
I thought I met a human oar  
    Ideally perfected.  
To me at least he seemed a man  
    Like any of our neighbours,  
Formed on the self-same sort of plan  
    For high aquatic labours.

His simple raiment took my eyes :  
    No fancy duds he sported  
He had his rather lengthy thighs  
    Exiguously "shorted."  
A scarf about his neck he threw ;  
    A zephyr hid his torso ;  
He looked as much a man as you—  
    Perhaps a trifle more so.

And yet I fancy you'll agree,  
    When his description's ended,  
No merely mortal thing could be  
    So faultlessly commended.

I noted down with eager hand  
The points that mark his glory ;  
So grant me your attention, and  
I'll set them out before ye.

His hands are ever light to catch ;  
Their swiftness is astounding :  
No billiard-ball could pass or match  
The pace of their rebounding.  
Then, joyfully released and gay,  
And springy as Apollo's,  
With what a fine columnar sway  
His balanced body follows !

He keeps his sturdy legs applied  
Just where he has been taught to,  
And always moves his happy slide  
Precisely as he ought to.  
He owns a wealth of symmetry  
Which nothing can diminish,  
And strong men shout for joy to see  
His wonder-working finish.

He never rows his stroke in dabs—  
A fatal form of sinning—  
And never either catches crabs  
Or misses the beginning.  
Against his ship the storm-winds blow,  
And every lipper frets her :  
He hears the cox cry, “ Let her go ! ”  
And swings and drives and lets her.

Besides, he has about his knees,  
    His feet, his wrists, his shoulders,  
Some points which make him work with ease  
    And fascinate beholders.  
He is, in short, impeccable,  
    And—this perhaps is oddest  
In one who rows and looks so well—  
    He is supremely modest.

He always keeps his language cool,  
    Nor stimulates its vigour  
In face of some restrictive rule  
    Of dietary rigour.  
And when the other men annoy  
    With trivial reproaches,  
He is his Captain's constant joy,  
    The comfort of his coaches.

When grumblers call the rowing vile,  
    Or growl about the weather,  
Our Phœnix smiles a cheerful smile  
    And keeps the crew together.  
No "hump" is his—when everything  
    Looks black his zeal grows stronger,  
And makes his temper, like his swing,  
    Proportionately longer.

One aim is his through weeks of stress :—  
    By each stroke rowed to aid work.  
No facile sugared prettiness  
    Impairs his swirling blade-work.

And, oh, it makes the pulses go  
A thousand to the minute  
To see the man sit down and row  
A ding-dong race and win it !

• • • • •

Such was, and is, the perfect oar,  
A sort of river Prince, Sirs ;  
I never met the man before,  
And never saw him since, Sirs.  
Yet still, I think, he moves his blade,  
As grand in style, or grander,  
As Captain of some Happy-Shade  
Elysian Leander.

## STYLE AND THE OAR.

To sit upon a seat

With the straps about your feet,

And to grasp an oar and use it, to recover and to slide,

And to keep your body swinging,

And to get the finish ringing,

And to send the light ship leaping as she whizzes on the tide ;

' To make the rhythm right

And your feather clean and bright,

And to slash as if you loved it, though your muscles seem to crack ;

And, although your brain is spinning,

To be sharp with your beginning,

And to heave your solid body indefatigably back ;

Not to be a fraction late

When the rate is thirty-eight ;

To be quick when stroke demands it, to be steady when he's slow ;

And to keep a mind unheeding

When the other lot are leading,

And to set your teeth and brace your back and just to make her go.

And when she gives a roll  
To swing out with heart and soul,  
And to balance her and rally her and get her trim and true ;  
And while the ship goes flying  
To hear the coxswain crying,  
“Reach out, my boys, you’ll do it !” and, by Jupiter,  
you do !

To seek your bed at ten,  
And to tumble out again  
When the clocks are striking seven and the winds of March  
are chill ;  
To be resolute and steady,  
Cheerful, regular, and ready  
For a run upon the Common or a tramp up Putney Hill ;

To sink yourself and be  
Just a unit, and to see  
How the individual withers and the crew is more and more ;  
And to guard without omission  
Every glorious tradition  
That the ancient heroes founded when they first took up  
an oar ;

In short, to play the game  
Not so much for name or fame  
As to win a common honour for your colours light or dark—  
Oh ! it’s this has made your crew-man  
Such a chivalrous and true man  
Since the day that Father Noah went a-floating in the Ark.

## LAUS REMIGII.

THE Springtime, what a mercy 'tis to both our Universities :  
 They realise the curse it is to read for Trip or Greats.  
 They both forget their ologies, lay down their load of  
 knowledges,  
 And, lo, the giddy colleges divide themselves by Eights.

The Proctor takes it vernally, and, though he fines nocturnally,  
 Grows kindlier diurnally, and acts like me or you.  
 If men will get their hands away and swing, he understands  
 a way  
 Of putting airs and bands away and cheering on his crew.

Your Don may sometimes sham an ursine manner (like  
 examiners),  
 He may declare "I am *iners*, and find my fellows bores" ;  
 But *now* each college resident, Dean, Master, Provost,  
 President,  
 By every word he says identifies himself with oars.

The wrangler hasn't got an use for tangent or hypotenuse :  
 He doesn't deem it rotten news to hear about the rows ;  
 And gentlemen, whose bliss a row of sentences from Cicero  
 Is found in, wouldn't miss a row for reams of Latin prose.

Now coaches—on their star equestrian mounts they're heard  
afar—request

Their pupils not to mar a quest for bumps by playing  
pranks.

And mites who do not fear a natatorial risk can steer an  
eight,

And try to find how near an eight can travel to the banks.

So here's the praise of boats in May, of many-coloured coats  
in May,

Of One my mem'ry notes in maiden meditation free,—  
But, since she left me high and dry, her charms I now defy  
and rhy-

-me a stave or two to try and dry the tears she weeps  
for me.

## THE CORK REGATTA.

1902.

THERE was Lord O'Brien,  
That Four Courts lion,  
Says he, "You must enter, you must," he says.  
He's the boy to coax,  
Wid his stories and jokes,  
Ould Pether, the Lord Chief Justice, is.  
And, upon me soul,  
He's bought 'em a bowl  
Subscribed by a mighty fine gentry list ;  
And he wheedled the crews  
Till they couldn't refuse,  
And packed them into the entry list.

Leander came  
Wid their roll of fame,  
But Henley had made 'em look crazy now.  
Wid their caps of pink  
They could make you blink,  
And their cox sayin', "Arrah, be aisy now."

They were cheerful and gay  
In their English way,  
And they never looked to be troublin', boys,  
Till they caught a sight  
Of the black and white  
Of the Trinity College Dublin boys.

The *Ruderverein*  
Looked mighty fine,  
And, oh, but it's confident still I am  
That they'll make us blow  
When they start to row,  
These lads of the Emperor William.  
They smoked no pipes,  
But they drank their swipes,  
And they ate their mutton and chicken up ;  
And *Donner und Blitz*,  
But they gave us fits,  
Wid their German moustaches stickin' up.

Emmanuel too  
Looked neat and new :  
From the banks of the Cam, where the willows are,  
They had travelled to see  
The river Lee,  
Where the currents and tides and the billows are.  
There were Oxford Blues  
In their College crews,  
And they didn't mean to be dawdlin' there  
In the head of the Is-  
-is dressed up nice,  
And the Scarlet College of Magdalen there.

From the South and the North  
Of the isle came forth  
The Irishmen full of devilry :  
    They were broth of boys  
    For the fun and noise,  
And good at rowing and revelry.  
    And when they had done  
    There was one crew won,  
And eight of the rowers were frisky there ;  
    But none of the rest  
    Looked much depressed,  
For they knew there was plenty of whisky there.

## THE BANKS OF THE LEE.

I MET some good fellows a short time ago ;  
 With the fire of true friendship their hearts were aglow ;  
 And it's oh but they took of good whisky no end,  
 With a fist for a foe and a hand for a friend.  
 And my soul says, " Here's luck, wheresoever they be,  
 To the great men I met on the banks of the Lee."

Oh their songs on the Lee (and it's sweetly they sang),  
 How they went with a swing, how they closed with a  
 bang !

They toasted old Erin, the brave and the gay,  
 Till the night faded out, and, behold, it was day.  
 And at last—oh, a louder I shall not hear soon—  
 Came a forty-voice chorus with twenty in tune.

If 'twas laughter you longed for or friendship you sought,  
 They were both to be had, but they couldn't be bought.  
 You were called on to pay—it was only in part—  
 With a laugh of your own and a show of your heart.  
 Oh this—and we gave it—is always the fee  
 That they ask for their love on the banks of the Lee.

There was one, a Chief Justice—he didn't live there,  
But he came mighty grand from the County of Clare.  
"Brother Andrews," says he, as he sat in his Court,  
"I think," says old Peter, "we'll cut the thing short.  
If we leave the Court now we can all of us see  
The races they row on the tide of the Lee."

Another—and soon may I see him again!—  
He was always on hand with a glass of champagne;  
And all the blue devils that make you repine  
He could drown, and he did, in a bumper of wine.  
If you stopped for a moment, "I'm Sheriff," says he,  
"And I'll *make* yez drink fair on the banks of the Lee."

There was fun and diversion from morning to night,  
And the smile of the girls 'twas a sunbeam for light.  
Their eyes were like sapphires, their teeth were like pearls,  
And it's Cork on the Lee that's the city for girls,—  
Oh, they spoke us and joked us so frank and so free,  
That we pined to stay on by the banks of the Lee.

There was work for the glass, for the knife and the fork,  
There was work for dry throats in the City of Cork;  
And whatever they did at the end of their meals  
There was one thing they didn't—they never tapped heels.  
So here's love and good luck with a thirty times three  
From the banks of the Thames to the men of the Lee.

## THE SEASON.

Lo, it's the season ! The talk is of marriages,  
Maidens and bachelors made into one ;  
Dowagers driving in all sorts of carriages,  
Resolute Benedicks watching the fun.  
Band-boxy, up-to-date, deucedly pretty girls,  
Breezy old bucks who date back to the Ark ;  
Guardsmen who chaff and are chaffed by the witty girls—  
Guardsmen are always in place in the Park.

Dinners and dances—we take them all dashingly—  
Staircases happily crowded with girls.  
Snowy-white shoulders, and golden hair flashingly  
Gleaming and glancing with diamonds and pearls.  
Music that swings you and makes you feel supple, too,  
Bliss for your partner and rapture for you ;  
Fans made for one that can cover a couple, too ;  
Nooks for the lucky ones sitting it through.

Now we can eye with an air supercilious  
Countrified cousins at function and show ;  
Smile while their vigorous bands Piccadilly us  
In to the pictures or out to the Row.

Catalogued, ardent, they throng the Academy,  
Prattle with pleasure or shudder with shocks,  
Startled by nudities Evy or Adamy,  
Thrilled by the portraits of children in frocks.

Ladies with curls (and a patent for curling 'em),  
Men with moustaches and looking their best,  
See how they vanish in hansoms to Hurlingham,  
All irreproachably booted and dressed.

Sweet *têtes-à-têtes* that mean much without saying it,  
Lawns of cool grass that invite you to stroll ;  
Ponies and polo and prodigies playing it,  
Turning and charging and striking for goal.

Then we go whirling—that's always the way we go—  
Off after dinner to Hawtrey or Maude ;  
Starched, patent-leathered and black to the play we go ;  
Some of us laugh while the others applaud.  
Some of us think that our plays are too clever now,  
Some of us hold that the drama is dead.  
Some swear by Roberts, who's better than ever now ;  
So to our supper, and then to our bed.

Yes, it's the season ! our time for frivolity !  
Off with our troubles for once in a while !  
See with a ripple of jesting and jollity  
Smoky old London breaks out in a smile !  
Racketings, jauntings, and innocent devilry,  
Hearts beating madly, but always in tune,  
Playtime and pleasure and rushes of revelry—  
That is the way of the season in June !

## THE QUEEN'S LOOK.

LUMMY, Billy, I seed 'er ! Yuss,  
 That wos the Queen ! You seed 'er too.  
 Crikey, but aint it lucky for us  
 We wos nippers, Billy, and got squeezed through.

Father 'e 'adn't a chance, not 'e.  
 'E was stuck at the back of all them rows  
 With three gals bustin' theirselves to see  
 Right in 'is front and over 'is toes.

'Ark to 'im cussin' ! Yer'll always tell  
 When they've bested father—'e just lets fly.  
 But you and me, why we seed her well ;  
 And aint she beautiful—oh my eye !

We wos 'ip-'urrayin'—she seed us plain,  
 For she give us a look—like a cup o' tea  
 When you're shiverin' cold with the wind and rain :  
 That's just 'ow 'er look went into me.

And I feel that 'appy I'll take my 'ook,—  
 I don't want to see no more o' their fuss ;  
 But I'm goin' 'ome to think o' the look  
 Wich the Queen, God bless 'er, she give to us.

## HAPPY CHANCE.

OH happy and delightful Chance !  
 By all men ardently pursued,  
 Swift through a tangled maze you dance—  
 Your trailing skirts their grasp elude ;  
 And none your airy flight may stem,  
 Or catch your gauzy garment's hem.

Now from a mine the maiden smiles,  
 And now the mart her quips control.  
 Her lures outmatch the merchant's wiles ;  
 Her glamour cheats the poet's soul ;  
 And kings and outcasts, at her glance,  
 Meet in the race for Happy Chance.

Myself have followed, followed far,  
 O'er barren wastes and blustering seas ;  
 Have swum the flood and leaped the bar,  
 Nor sought nor gained a moment's ease.  
 No toil, no daring could advance  
 My vain pursuit of Happy Chance.

And still throughout this waning year  
I thought to seize her at the last,  
For, lo, sometimes she drew me near—  
Then with a laugh the vision passed ;  
And I, whom she could so entrance,  
Still failed to clutch my Happy Chance.

New Year ! attend, and hear me swear  
I would not hold her if I might !  
So let her still be far and fair,  
And unpossessed, and still a sprite.  
Pursuit and failure but enhance  
The high delights of Happy Chance.

# LIVES OF GREAT MEN



## I.

### THE BISHOP OF PECKHAM GREEN.

PIZARRO POLO CORTEZ JONES  
Was in his youth a bag of bones,  
A skinny, sallow, grubby child,  
Whose sandy, touzled hair grew wild,  
Who wore (to see with, I suppose)  
A pair of gig-lamps on his nose.  
“Knobs” he was called—his joints were knotty—  
His other playful name was “Spotty,”  
From which, I fear, we must conclude  
That he was plain, his fellows rude.  
He never had a tie tied straight;  
He always came to lessons late.  
His shirt displeased his friends because  
It should be washed, but never was.  
His exercises, verse or prose  
(And how he did them goodness knows),  
Were always what they should not be,  
And so got marked with “*pessime*.”

He did not know, and could not tell,  
Who were the Kings of Israel,  
And always showed he had imbued a  
Pronounced distaste for those of Judah,  
Refusing, though the cane impended,  
To start their list or even end it.  
In sober truth you could not want  
To meet a boy more ignorant.  
Kindness to boys like that? Oh, stow it!  
You must be firm with them and show it.  
The place below his ragged jacket  
Simply invited one to whack it.  
His ears projecting seemed to say,  
"Come, box me, box me every day."  
And so his ears were boxed, and he  
Was caned all over properly.

"I do not flog," his master said,  
"To occupy my leisure.  
Pizarro, if I smack your head  
It does not give me pleasure.  
Flogging and smacking are to me  
No things of joy or beauty:  
I do them sadly, not with glee,  
And from a sense of duty."

Pizarro deemed it idle chatter;  
To him it didn't seem to matter.  
"A whack's a whack, howe'er you strike it,"  
He said, and didn't seem to like it,

Showing—a painful exhibition—  
A hardened, sullen disposition,  
Which doomed him (here I quote his master)  
To future failure and disaster.

Such was Pizarro's life at school,  
Not formed or planned on any rule,  
Save this :—if at a given minute  
There comes a scrape, be sure you're in it.  
If Justice chanced to want a victim,  
She never paused, but promptly picked him :  
Not that his crimes were great or many—  
He rarely perpetrated any—  
But rather that his looks bewrayed him ;  
He blushed with ease, a fact that made him,  
When red beyond all recognition,  
Obnoxious to extreme suspicion.  
The booby-trap that spilt its water  
On Dr Cufflad's matron's daughter ;  
That worthy matron's bed—oh, fie !—  
Converted to an apple-pie ;  
The broken pane, the tattered syntax,  
The master's highlows filled with tintacks ;  
The dart impelled by secret force  
Upon its swift and peccant course—  
These crimes, and more as fine and large,  
Were always laid to Jones's charge.  
Not his the deeds, but his the rueing :  
To blush when charged is worse than doing.

Well, well, the years passed on, and he  
Passed his matriculation :  
In ancient days it used to be  
    No hard examination.  
His Greek and his arithmetic  
    He was not very pat in ;  
He knew no French ; he used to stick  
    In Euclid and in Latin.  
Yet he became—the feat was great—  
An Oxford undergraduate !

I shall not follow his career  
From week to week, from year to year ;  
    The task would bore you.  
I can describe Pizarro's acts  
By laying certain salient facts  
    Coldly before you :—  
He did not run, he would not row,  
His private reading was no go ;  
    He knew no cricket.  
He did not seem to be aware  
That when a pig-skin's full of air,  
    You catch or kick it.  
In this dead list of negatives  
One positive stands out and lives :  
    Upon his face he wore a fur-suit—  
His cheeks and chin were very hirsute.  
In short, although his comrades jeered,  
    He was a smug and grew a beard !  
The years went on, and finally  
    Our hero took a pass degree,

Fading from Oxford life away  
As P. P. Cortez Jones, B.A.

I pass the intervening years,  
With all their hopes and joys and fears.  
Let this poor fact suffice for fame,  
That Jones took Orders and became,  
His life progressing at a due rate,  
A Church of England country curate.  
Would that my humble pen were equal  
To telling all the glorious sequel ;  
Would that my skill could paint the glory  
Of our Pizarro's splendid story !  
Enough. I'll take one blazing scene  
To show my readers what I mean :—  
That fate unkindly tests and searches  
Our early lives with canes and birches ;  
Or takes and dooms us to perdition  
With keepings-in or imposition ;  
Makes us uncouth and void of sense,  
And far too apt to give offence,  
Merely in order to devote us  
To later splendour, and promote us  
On our dead selves, as stepping-stones,  
To higher things—'twas thus with Jones.

Some twenty years went by. The school  
Where Jones was deemed a graceless fool  
Whom nothing was excused to,  
Still stood upon a hill-top high,

Its turrets pointing to the sky  
Precisely as they used to.  
The shouts, the tramp of boyish feet,  
The masters' houses in the street,  
Rented at quite a stiff rent ;  
The games, the tasks, the furtive Bohn—  
All were the same ; the boys alone  
Were, though they seemed not, different.

Oh, day of days, oh, joy that I  
Should be this day's recorder !  
The sun came out, the hours went by  
In their appointed order.  
The Prefects looked like little kings,  
And every impish urchin  
Wore all the tasteful Sunday things  
He mostly went to Church in.  
The masters, if some fault was done,  
Showed a benignant blindness :  
They smiled as though their life was one  
Unbroken round of kindness.  
The fathers came, an eager crowd,  
And with them came the mothers ;  
Sisters were bashfully allowed  
To walk and talk with brothers.  
This was, in short—permit the phrase—  
No day of blame, no teach-day,  
But just our day for prize and praise—  
In fact it was our Speech-Day.  
A boy came on the daïs dressed  
(A tall and comely fellow)

In swallow-tails and low-cut vest  
To represent Othello.

Another, garbed the same as he,  
Whose pride it was to own a  
Bass voice, expired in agony  
As Lady Desdemona.

Tell, Harpagon, and *Œ*dipus,  
We lumped them all together :  
In evening clothes they spoke to us,  
And pumps of patent leather.

And though (in Greek) they feigned despair,  
And then (in French) grew skittish,  
The accents that they talked in were  
Imperially British.

The speeches ended, the Headmaster rose ;  
He hemmed, he hawed, and then he blew his nose,  
Spoke of his pride at being there and greeting  
So many friends at this their annual meeting.  
Glanced, as he spoke, at Harrow and at Eton,  
But held that Rodwell's record was unbeaten :  
In every point, in scholarship, in tone,  
In sports, in numbers Rodwell held its own.  
Its grounds were large, its buildings were extensive,  
Its air was good, its fees were inexpensive :  
All things, in fact, combined—as all things should—  
To make it better while they kept it good.  
“ Amongst our old Rodwellians one,” he said,  
“ Is here to-day whose fame is widely spread ;  
A man of genius, tempered by sobriety,  
Of learning made sublimely great by piety.

I was his friend at school ; I knew him well ;  
No words of mine are adequate to tell  
The story of his boyish deeds—I mean  
The Bishop"—here he glowed—"of Peckham Green.  
He, as each one of you, of course, surmises,—  
You know his goodness,—will present the prizes."

Of Bishops many have I seen,  
But none so nobly meek or  
So mildly large as Peckham Green,  
Whose signature was "Pecor."  
Fate had not done the thing by halves,  
Nor had she meanly catered  
For one with such a pair of calves  
So admirably gaitered.  
On all the best of boiled and roast  
His being he had grounded :  
What came beneath his chest was most  
Episcopally rounded.  
He rose, a gorgeous presence, and  
He laid his views before us ;  
His voice was dignified but bland,  
His attitude decorous.  
"In all you do, in all you try,  
Strive for the perfect tense, boys ;  
If," he went on, "your aim is high,  
You won't hit low : that's sense, boys.  
When I was but a little boy  
I tried to guide each action  
To give my worthy parents joy,  
My masters satisfaction.

And now—" he paused ; we gave a shout ;  
We understood his thesis ;  
Our wild applausive yells filled out  
The aposiopesis.  
But while the cheers still rent the sky,  
And while the air was humming,  
Dim memories of days gone by  
Kept obstinately coming.  
Somehow, I felt, I knew those tones—  
Great Zeus ! how shall I tell it ?—  
I recognised Pizarro Jones  
In Peckham's portly prelate !

## II.

## THE DUKE OF DONNYBROOK AND BOW.

THE fifteenth Duke of Donnybrook and Bow—

It is a splendid and an ancient title—  
 Felt that life's lamp was sinking very low,  
 Leaving but little of the spark called vital.  
 His sins—nay, let us speak of them as errors—  
 Were few ; for such a Duke death has no terrors.

He was a good old man ; not overwise,  
 But Dukes require no ample store of wisdom ;  
 Dulness had no disfavour in his eyes,  
 And dull men loved him, for he never quizzed 'em.  
 He was no wit—in fact, I don't know whether  
 It's right to mention Dukes and wit together.

Yet he was great : he won the Derby race  
 First with a chestnut, next time with a bay gee.  
 In every Cabinet he had a place,  
 And so they made him G.C.B. and K.G.  
 In every English county he had got land ;  
 He owned a river and a moor in Scotland.

All other things he had his rank to suit :

Cedars and oaks his spacious gardens grew in ;  
Much glass he owned for orchids and for fruit—

Possessed five castles and a hoary ruin.

Pictures and prints—I scarce know how to tell 'em—  
And busts and arms and folios bound in vellum.

That death should take this man appears to me

A most un-English and pro-Boer proceeding.

To cut the flowers and let the coarse stuff be

Is, you'll agree with me, unskilful weeding.

It needs a lot of pretty hard forgiving

To take a Duke and leave a pauper living.

Such pleas availed not, as the hour drew nigh,

To check the purpose of the grizzly spectre.

The Duke, good soul, resigned himself to die,

Sustained, consoled, encouraged by the Rector,

Who held a Ducal living, and was trying

To do his best to help the Ducal dying.

So the Duke died, and all men praised him well

(Some praised too much, but nobody rebuked 'em) ;

But, which was strange, no man of them could tell

Who should succeed the dead Duke in the Dukedom.

Much to the British public's consternation,

The Duke, it seemed, had left no male relation.

Three brothers he had had, but one

In infancy departed.

His breath was short, his race was run

Almost before he started.

The second might have travelled far,  
And might have died in bed, Sir.  
One day he bought a motor-car ;  
The next day he was dead, Sir.  
The third one (of a City man  
He seemed to have the makings)  
In manhood's prime set out to plan  
Commercial undertakings.  
The City was his hunting-ground :  
In many a bright prospectus  
On which his Lordship's name was found  
He offered to direct us.  
Withal, the man was never rash,  
For, ere the wise foreboded  
Or even hinted at a crash,  
He skilfully unloaded.  
He floated out his companies,  
But when there came a gale, or  
When clouds were black, finance's seas  
Knew no more careful sailor.  
If storms arose he judged it best,  
Unless they could be weathered,  
To make for home ; he had a nest  
Most comfortably feathered.  
But how shall man foretell his end ?  
His companies outgrew him,  
And one declared a dividend—  
The shock was such it slew him.  
The Duke, I should have said before,  
Although he liked the fair much,  
Lived all his life a bachelor,  
And didn't seem to care much.

Though often tenderly inclined,  
And twice within an ace of  
Engagement rings, he failed to find  
A girl to make Her Grace of.  
He owed immunity from strife  
(And that was all he did owe)  
To this : he lived without a wife,  
And died without a widow.  
So, when the old man sank to sleep,  
We mourned for him the rather  
That not a son was left to weep  
The loss of such a father.  
Male relatives of all degrees  
He once had had by dozens,  
They all were doomed to predecease—  
His uncles, nephews, cousins.  
Throughout his life the Duke had been  
In almost ceaseless mourning :  
His cousins vanished from the scene  
Without a word of warning.  
Just as the Duke regained his smile  
And ceased to be condolent,  
One cousin met a lion, while  
Another plumbed the Solent.  
A third up Monte Rosa went—  
It took him hours to win it.  
He made an unforeseen descent  
In less than half a minute.  
A fourth would chase the fox, and Fate,  
While he was chasing, chased him.  
She had a longish time to wait  
Before the jade outpaced him.

She caught him girt with hunting folk,  
    And, though he fain had missed her,  
A neck or nothing man, he broke  
    The former with the Bicester.  
But why the fatal list pursue?  
    I've given you a sample.  
To prove that what I say is true  
    These instances are ample.  
All men who heard the story deemed  
    The Duke unduly careless :  
In such a well-known Duke it seemed  
    Unjust to be so heirless.  
At Court the news gave great surprise,  
    But, though no doubt the King wished  
That facts had shaped it otherwise,  
    The Dukedom seemed extinguished.

Now mark the sequel ; lay it well to heart.  
Note how the fortunes of great families  
And ancient houses hang upon a hair ;  
How a mere chance may shatter them, and how  
A humble hand may 'stablish them again.  
The dead Duke's family solicitors  
Were Messrs Deedswell, Ginnyfee, and Ritter,  
A well-known firm. They carried on their work  
Within the classic Fields of Lincoln's Inn.  
Much had they grieved when their old client died,  
Not idly, as a common man might grieve,  
But deeply with a poignant business-grief  
As of three men who see a stream of wealth  
Dry at its source, and know not where to turn

To find another half so bountiful.  
Never again would it be theirs to send  
Those stout half-yearly bills so promptly paid :  
So much "for writing you," so much again  
"For two attendances *re* Broseley Farm";  
"For taking your instructions" so much more ;  
"For drawing deed"—you know the way it runs,  
With all its folios ; "for engrossing same"—  
In short the items all set down that make  
Grist for the comfortable lawyer's mill.  
Never again ! the thought made Deedswell sad,  
And Ginnyfee was sad, and Ritter too.  
To them thus grieving came their Clerk, a man  
Bred to the law and by the law made keen.  
He, since the Duke had died, had made the case  
His own : full many a wakeful night he passed  
With all the dull and dusty documents  
Wherein was writ the story of the house.  
Much had he pored o'er ancient muniments,  
Had mastered all the records of the race,  
Their origin, their genealogy,  
Duly worked out in complicated trees.

Thus fortified and crammed and brimming o'er,  
He came before his gloomy principals,  
And at a nod from Ginnyfee he spoke :  
"Sirs, I assume that you are seized of all  
The salient points that mark this tragedy,  
For tragedy it is as all men know.  
I spare you their recital and proceed  
Straight to my point, the very point of points,  
Though noted by no mortal man before.

It is recorded that the thirteenth Duke  
Was born in 1752 ; he died  
In 1820, having had two sons.  
One, who was born in 1785,  
Succeeded him as fourteenth Duke ; with him  
We are not now concerned, but with his brother  
Born three years later, 1788.  
What of that Ducal scion, Gentlemen ?  
How fared it with him ? What became of him ?”  
Hereat the heavy cloud on Deedswell’s face  
Lifted, and Ginnyfee was seen to smile.  
And Ritter said, “ Proceed, young man, proceed !”  
“ Lord Arthur Battlemore,” the Clerk went on,  
“(That was the young man’s name) was very wild ;  
A harum-scarum temper marked his acts.  
What then ? Here comes the point : they shipped him off,  
When he was twenty-two, to Africa,  
And he was never heard of after that.  
Whether he lived or died, or if he married  
And reared a family, no man can say  
For certain—but I think we should inquire.  
For it may chance that in that torrid land  
Some grandson or great-grandson yet may live.  
Should we not seek him ? Must we not exhaust  
All means to find an heir to him we mourn ?”  
He ceased, but his three principals broke out  
In exultation : never was there heard  
So great a noise from three solicitors.  
“ Eureka !” Deedswell cried ; it was not true,  
But Ritter echoed him, and Ginnyfee,  
Swept beyond prudence, cried “ Eureka !” too.

They appointed a Commission to report with proper care,  
On the possible survival of an unsuspected heir.  
The instructions that they gave them were exhaustive and  
concise,  
"If he lives," they wrote, "just find him, and you needn't  
mind the price.  
Through the Continent of Africa your duty you'll discharge :  
It's a biggish stretch of country, so the order's rather large.  
Still, the task you're undertaking is ineffably sublime,  
And we don't intend to hamper you or limit you in time.  
Fare you well ; do all you can, Sirs ; and, wherever you  
may go,  
Think of England, think of duty, think of Donnybrook  
and Bow."

I may spare you the recital of a lot of deeds they did ;  
And some painful things they suffered in oblivion may be  
hid.  
But I can't forbear to mention that they learnt to speak  
with ease  
Many queer and tricky lingoes and the dialects of these.  
When upset upon the Pungwe they were saved for fame  
and us  
By the opportune arrival of a hippopotamus,  
Who took in the situation and conveyed them from the  
wreck,  
Clinging tightly to salvation by his rather massive neck.  
Then they wandered through Sahara, traced the Congo to  
its source ;  
Took the Niger in a steam-launch, and were wrecked again,  
of course ;

Did a trip or two from Cairo, where they lingered for a while,  
And conversed with all the fellahs whom they found about the Nile.

They discovered that an eight-oar isn't equal for a bump  
To that desert-ship, the camel, with a saddle on his hump,  
And that missionary fillet or explorer barbecue  
Isn't always used for dinner in the wilds of Timbuctoo.  
Their adventures in the forests make a formidable list :  
They were shot at by the Pigmies, but were fortunately missed ;

And they learnt by having suffered how your courtesy it tries  
To be entertained by Bushmen or be feasted on by flies.  
Kaffirs, Hottentots and Zulus, Matabeles, Portuguese,  
Fuzzy-Wuzzies, men of Benin and the savage Ashantees,  
Every tribe they plied with questions as to whether they had met

Any man whose brow seemed fitted for a ducal coronet.  
Failure, failure, always failure ! And the months went slipping by,

And no clue appeared to gladden their investigating eye—  
Till one day on Lake Nyanza, as they paddled their canoe,  
They were greeted by a negro with a cheery "how-de-do ?"  
When they heard these words in English—oh, the magic of that tongue !—

All this middle-aged Commission felt at once supremely young.

They approach him, and their Chairman with a joyful eye perceives

On his chest the ducal birthmark of a strawberry *with leaves* !

In his hut he kept his records : all the amulets were there,  
All the marriage-lines and tokens that can make a man an  
heir ;  
And they found that, though a black man, he could trace  
—and did with glee—  
To a line of Dukes in England quite a flawless pedigree.  
So they cabled home to London, “We have found the  
heir alive ;  
He’s great-grandson to Lord Arthur, and his age is twenty-  
five.  
We have packed the proofs securely, and shall start with  
him to-night.  
He has very pleasant manners, but he isn’t very white.”

The sixteenth Duke of Donnybrook and Bow,  
George Alured Augustus Battlemore,  
Marquis of Goldstone, Earl of Ballyhinch  
In Ireland’s peerage, Baron Struachan  
In Scotland, and I know not what beside,  
Dwells in the Castle that his ancestor,  
The Great Red Duke, built centuries ago.  
Oh, what a scene that was when he returned  
To claim his own and be an English peer.  
Rumour preceded him and spread the news,  
And all the country-side was set agog.  
The tenants all were there, a goodly crowd,  
Stout, comfortable farmers and their wives,  
Peasants in smocks, and stablemen, and grooms,  
And footmen with their well-developed calves ;  
The Parish Council with its Chairman too,  
And all the children from the village school,

The Rector at their head ; he had prepared  
A long congratulatory address,  
And meant to read it to the coming Duke.  
At last there rose a shout, "He comes, he comes!"  
And lo ! the County Yeomanry appeared  
A-clatter up the ducal avenue.  
Dragoons they were, a set of burly men  
On burly horses—a terrific sight.  
Behind them whirled the family barouche,  
Drawn by four spanking greys, and in it sat  
The Duke, the object of all men's desires.  
"He's black," said farmer Hobbs, "as black as black.  
I never seed a Duke like that afore."  
But Mrs Hobbs opined you couldn't look  
For everything to please you : there must be  
A sort of give and take : and thus to carp  
At colour was a flying in the face  
Of Providence that had restored the Duke.  
Then the whole multitude broke out in cheers ;  
The carriage stopped, and so the Rector spoke :—  
"Your Grace," he said—hereat the black Duke smiled—  
"We have assembled here to welcome you.  
Before the ancient mansion of your race  
We greet you, for we know that you will show  
The virtues that have marked your loyal house  
In Church and State, and on the tented field.  
From that far country, where you had your home,  
You bring the——" here the Rector paused and coughed,  
And grew embarrassed ; he had meant to say  
"The white flower of a blameless life," but now,  
Noting the ducal ebony, he thought

The words were tactless, so he slurred them o'er,  
And passed to other things, and made an end.  
The Duke replied—he had been coached with skill—  
Leapt from his carriage, shook a thousand hands,  
And all men said, “ How affable ! ” and all  
Their wives and daughters, as they saw him pass,  
Observed his smile and much admired his teeth.  
And now, beloved of all, he holds his rule.  
Society acclaims him ; he is seen  
At every meeting of the Primrose League ;  
Opens bazaars, and rides to hounds, and shoots.  
And though he sometimes shocks the staider folk  
With intemperate laughter, or with songs  
And dances of a savage character,  
These faults are venial, and his neighbours own  
They are such eccentricities as Dukes  
May use at will, and none the less be Dukes.

*P.S.*—The ‘Morning Post’ announces this :  
“ We are informed a marriage is arranged  
Between the Duke of Donnybrook and Bow  
And Lady Angelina, only child  
Of Geoffrey, Marquis of FitzAltamont.”

## III.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ADOLPHUS  
BUFFERTOP, M.P.

ADOLPHUS, when I knew him first, was stout,  
Rotund and apple-cheeked, a cheerful boy,  
Within whose trouser-pocket there reposed  
Much treasure garnered from the deuce knows where,  
And stored with undiscriminating zeal.  
Item, a watch-key, not designed to fit  
His watch, or any watch that mortal knew ;  
Item, three yards of string, a tangled maze ;  
Two chestnuts pierced with holes, and so prepared  
To break or conquer in the mimic fray—  
“Conkers” we called them ere they met the doom  
That falls to every chestnut soon or late.  
Item, a pencil guiltless of a point ;  
Two lengths of stout elastic formed to be  
The missile power of his catapult ;  
The catapult was absent : it had been  
Confiscate to an usher weeks before.  
An indiarubber ball ; three drawing-pins ;  
Two little slabs of polished cocoa-nut,  
Soon to be fashioned by his cunning hand

To anchors, crosses, hearts, and things that were  
His sister's pleasure and his mother's pride.  
Item, a piece of steel—it had a spring,  
And some day it was meant to take its place  
Upon a pocket pistol, and discharge  
Shots at his comrades' calves—you know the kind.  
Item, an apple—what, at least, had been  
An apple once, but now reduced to core,  
Fluffy and brown with age, it had become  
The mouldy relic of a ribstone pippin.  
One halfpenny and one farthing, and a knife  
Broken in blade ; a crumpled paper bag,  
Empty, but redolent of peppermint.  
And last, within the inmost corner lurked  
A lollipop not utterly devoid  
Of stickiness : reluctantly it left—  
Clinging to life and lining to the last—  
Its warm retreat, to be transferred at once  
Into its owner's much-desiring mouth.  
From these contents, so faithfully set down,  
You may infer Adolphus : he was much  
What many boys are at the age of twelve.  
Take him at fourteen, see him in his class  
With thirty other boys, the Lower Fourth.  
It is the hour for 'Cæsar' ; Buffertop  
Cared not for 'Cæsar' ; little did he reck  
Of Gaul and its divisions, little cared  
For marches, camps, attacks, and winter quarters.  
He saw no use in Latin, and his mind,  
Which should have followed Cæsar to the wars,  
Strayed to the tuck-shop or the playing field.

On him thus gathering wool an eagle eye  
Pounced, and the master's sudden voice broke out  
Sternly, "Stand up and construe, Buffertop."  
Oh, luckless Buffertop! He stood indeed,  
But that was all; his book was in his hand;  
His fevered eye went up and down the page,  
Finding nor stay nor comfort as it went.  
Rudge minor prompted him, but all in vain,  
And took an imposition for his pains.  
Then spoke the master, "'Tis the fifteenth time  
That Buffertop's attention is at fault.  
Such infamies must cease—one hundred lines!"  
"Oh, Sir!"—"Two hundred," was the swift retort.  
"Please, Sir, I didn't—" "Do four hundred then."  
"But, Sir, I—" "Write eight hundred; and to show  
That I will not be trifled with, stay in  
For two half-holidays at least, and learn  
That inattention brings you misery."  
He paused indignant, but the culprit's soul  
Was wrung with woe; down on the form he sank,  
And sobbed as though his heart would break, and wiped  
With inky fingers both his brimming eyes,  
And both his streaming cheeks, a hideous sight.  
And even as he sobbed a vision mocked  
His aching senses, and he saw the field  
Next Saturday, and all the merry rout  
Of happy boys, their cricket bats in hand,  
Pitching the stumps; and some one seemed to say  
"Where's Buffertop, our champion junior bat?"  
And some one answered him, "Kept in," whereat  
His heartless fellows laughed, and he the while,

Pent in the hateful class-room, laboured on.  
Ah well, he was assured that keepings in  
And lines were very dangerous to health.  
It might be he would fade away and die,  
And then too late his virtues would be known,  
And the harsh master who had kept him in,  
Racked by remorse, would pour upon his grave  
The tardy tribute of repentant tears.  
Too late, too late ! for Buffertop would lie  
Cold in his coffin underneath the earth.  
His piteous mother would bewail her son,  
Crying, "Give back, oh, give me back my boy !"  
And it might chance his father would be wroth,  
And send policemen to arrest his foe,  
And doom him to the scaffold and the rope.  
With this consoled he ceased to weep, and raised  
His heavy head, and, lastly, stowed away  
His handkerchief, and came to life again.

Sing, Muse, of wool and all that comes of wool !  
Take a swift flight to Coleman Street, E.C.,  
Where the wool-brokers mostly congregate.  
These are no common men : their minds are full  
Of ships and bales and fleeces shorn to be,  
    Not merely to the State,  
    But to themselves a gain.  
Attempt not to deceive them : 'tis in vain !  
Textures they know and values ; they have been  
Down to the Docks, and passed in keen review  
    The cargoes new.  
The heaped-up bales their careful eyes have seen ;

With eager fingers plucking here and there,  
The samples they compare,  
And, though the work is scarcely over nice,  
Force them to yield the secret of their price.  
Alas ! for wool which to the fancy seems

A thing of dreams,  
Fleecy and soft and, above all things, clean !  
Behold it as it is upon the Docks,  
Reeking, exuding oil from all its flocks.  
Vainly its votary seeks the silvery sheen  
Pictured in visions ; and, behold, he wears  
Old clothes which he may soil,

But cannot spoil,  
Since they were spoilt long years ago ; and Pears,  
Cleaver, Vinolia, or the ancient brown  
Renowned in Windsor's battlemented town—  
One of these famed detergents is the soap

To meet and cope  
With wool-reek when his daily work is done,  
Somewhere about the setting of the sun.  
Of these was Buffertop : in that old hall  
Where wool is sold his father had a seat.

Thither with agile feet  
And heart that in the hope of gain beat high,  
Close to the auctioneer's revolving eye,  
Blithely he strayed and loudly did he bawl.  
In the fierce babel of competing tongues  
He held his own and stretched his leathern lungs.  
And none, I ween, knew better how to take  
Occasion by the hand and through the maze  
Of prices win to profit, with a mind

Intent to make

His earnings overbalance his expense,  
And so to find  
He had his meed of unremitting praise  
Wherever he might roam,  
In Coleman Street, E.C., or in his home,  
While all men said, "This is a man of sense."

Our hero's father went the way  
That all wool-brokers must go.  
They have, like us, their little day,  
And then, like us, to dust go.  
He, when he passed the Stygian bounds  
And went to join the blest dead,  
Left some two hundred thousand pounds  
Judiciously invested.  
His father's joy Adolphus was :  
He never had a brother.  
He was an only child because  
There wasn't any other.  
And so his father left him land ;  
He left him all he could will :  
His stocks, his shares, his cash in hand,  
His business with its goodwill.  
Adolphus mourned his father gone,  
But, like a man of grit, he  
Resolved at once to carry on  
The business in the City.  
To Coleman Street he seemed to grow  
A sort of mould-of-form man ;  
He was wrapped up in wool, and so  
Was quoted as a warm man.

When things were slack, when things were firm,  
    In dull times as in full trade,  
He was, if I may use the term,  
    Bell-wether to the wool trade.  
This man of fleeces earned his wealth :  
    He never stooped to fleece us ;  
In open ways, and not by stealth,  
    He grew as rich as Croesus.  
And all men thought and spoke him fair,  
    Especially the poor folk.  
He had a house in Belgrave Square,  
    And owned a place in Norfolk.  
And though he rarely took the life  
    Of partridge or of pheasant,  
His own—he had a charming wife—  
    Was moderately pleasant.

At last there came a day when politics  
Grew mixed, and a majority that seemed  
Firm as a rocky cliff came crashing down.  
Thereafter there was hurrying to and fro,  
And rumour followed rumour till suspense  
Could bear no further burden, and at last  
The King dissolved his Parliament, and, lo !  
The writs went flying forth through all the land.  
Then Councils and Associations met ;  
Three Hundreds in their customary halls,  
With their array of usual Presidents,  
Passed party resolutions, and at once  
Adopted candidates and faced the foe.  
To his surprise—he mentioned that surprise

In his address—Adolphus Buffertop,  
A pillar of our staple industry,  
Was made a candidate. He had not hoped,  
He said, for so much honour ; yet he felt  
At such a crisis every man must give  
All that he could of energy and time  
To save the State, himself among the rest.  
Wherefore, he said (it is the common form),  
He was prepared to leave no stone unturned,  
Lest haply there might lurk beneath that stone  
A chance of triumph ; he had placed his hand  
Firm to the plough, and would not cast a look  
Behind him ; if his friends would only march  
Shoulder to shoulder, casting feuds aside,  
Nothing could stop them : they were bound to win.  
Thereon he took his cheque-book and subscribed  
To fifteen cricket clubs, to twenty-three  
Dissenting chapels, sixteen Church bazaars,  
Twelve football clubs, and presently became  
Oddfellow, Buffalo, and Heart of Oak,  
Free Gardener, Loyal Shepherd, Forester,  
And Ancient Druid and much else beside ;  
And having platformed here and platformed there,  
And spoken neither wisely nor too well,  
Was in the end triumphantly returned  
Head of the poll, and so the land had peace.

A genial man was Buffertop :  
He never put a side on.  
In Parliament he did not drop  
The friends he first relied on.

He worked upon a simple plan  
Of modest self-effacement.  
He did not seem to be a man  
For office or for place meant.  
He did not shine in brilliant deeds,  
But, like a man of sense, he  
Became devoted to the needs  
Of his Constituency.  
He knew his borough through and through :  
He was amongst the rare men  
Who knew the Aldermen, and knew  
His Presidents and Chairmen.  
And so this vale of tears became  
To him a Vale of Tempē,  
A place of joy that loved the name  
Of "Buffertop, our M.P."  
His understanding, I confess,  
Was what the world calls tacit.  
But, though his talk was valueless,  
His smile was quite an asset.  
With smiles the man was seen to glow  
When other men looked sadly,  
Whenever things appeared to go  
Immoderately badly.  
Whate'er he felt when most depressed  
By gloominess, he hid it.  
He always tried to smile his best,  
And generally did it.

Such men are always loved in Parliament ;  
Their merits far outshine the fitful gleams

Of the uneasy spirits who arise  
Time after time to catch the Speaker's eye,  
And rail at Governments, and hurl their shafts  
Of satire full in an opponent's face,  
Saying, "What men are these who thus conspire  
Against the safety of our well-loved land ;  
These indolent and miserable men,  
Lapped in the ease of great emoluments,  
Who see the country totter to its fall,  
And never raise a hand to draw it back ;  
Nay, rather, with a treacherous intent,  
Impel it to destruction ; wretched slaves  
Who proudly clank their fetters, and prepare  
Chains for the limbs of freedom-loving men ?"  
And some men cheer, and others, in despair,  
Cry, "'Vide, 'vide, 'vide !'" or rise and shake their fists,  
Implying that the frothy orator  
Is no whit better than the men he scorns.  
And some there are, sharp fighters high in place,  
Who, having to expound a policy,  
Are not contented to explain at ease  
Their scheme, but turn upon the other side,  
And taunt it, crying, "Lo ! these men, who now  
Oppose my policy, were once themselves  
Keen workers for the end I have in view.  
They failed, and now maliciously they strive  
Against my policy—I should say ours,  
For it is our united policy.  
And we are those that flinch not, but pursue  
Our nobler purpose with an energy  
Higher than theirs, and with a pure design,

Which, by its contrast, makes their paltry schemes  
Muddy and foul ; the true-souled patriot  
Is here upon these benches ; he who speaks  
Knows what he speaks of." Then, with dauntless mien,  
Raking the Hansard dust-heaps, they contrive  
To prove the Opposition but a mass  
Of suicidal inconsistencies ;  
And, on the other hand, themselves appear  
Firm and unwavering, patriotic, true,  
Devoted to their King and fatherland.

But Buffertop held on his way :

He was born for the humdrum and stock work ;  
He came to the House every day,  
And applauded and voted by clock-work.

The record of voting he burst :

When the lists had been faithfully reckoned,  
It was found that Adolphus was first,  
With a very inferior second.

The knowledge and talents that were  
The pride of his friends in the City,  
He joyfully brought them to bear  
On the business that's done in Committee.

And at length, as the years went along,  
Men said, when they met and discussed him,  
" We don't say he's brilliant or strong,  
But he's safe, and we like him and trust him.

“He is never sarcastic or coarse,  
And he never attemps to be funny ;  
But he works every day like a horse,  
And, in fact, he’s the man for our money.”

Every detail or ruling he knew,  
No man was so clearly a dab in it.  
Till at last—which was felt as his due—  
He was given a seat in the Cabinet.

And then in quick succession he became—  
He who was once the wool trade’s ornament—  
War Minister, Colonial Minister,  
And lastly Chancellor of the Exchequer  
And leader of the House ; and men declared  
No man had ever led it with a hand  
So firm and yet so pleasantly applied.  
And some wrote letters to the newspapers  
And said, “We knew this man in early life,  
And even as a lad he showed the signs  
Of greatness, and his brow was born to bear  
The wreath reserved for those who guard the State.”  
Such then was Buffertop, nay is, for still,  
As all men know, he lives and works and smiles.  
And some day, when his toil is done, the King  
Will make him peer, and send him to the Lords.

## IV.

## HERBERT WELLESLEY ROSSITER.

SOME time ago, with nothing much to do,  
It chanced that I was wandering through the City.  
Something there was I wanted to put through,  
But could not think of it, the more's the pity.  
These great resolves which have no base to stand on  
Are hard to act on, easy to abandon.

What hope inspired me? Whither was I bound?  
Why had I left my West-End fellow-mortals?  
What brought me to the consecrated ground,  
Close to the Mansion House's massive portals?  
I could not say—I might have been a dumb thing—  
But well I knew that there had once been something.

Ranged in a line, the buses seemed to fret  
The City constable, their kind instructor;  
While each one's pole—so closely were they set—  
All but impaled the previous one's conductor.  
And all the busmen looked most unseraphic,  
Thus blocked and hindered in the seething traffic.

I saw the brokers hurrying on their way,  
Swift past the corners where the cunning touts hide ;  
I saw promoters pouncing on their prey ;  
I saw the Stock Exchange—at least its outside.  
I heard the jobbers coax and curse and wheedle ;  
I saw the Bank, and, ah ! I saw its beadle.

Clerks with their downy faces too were there,  
Sharp as the razors that they had no use for ;  
And well-fed men—I knew not who they were :  
Such ignorance there's really no excuse for.  
At any rate, the rather stout and balder men  
I marked as Common Councillors or Aldermen.

My lingering gait, where most men seemed to race,  
Struck me at last as something almost shameless ;  
Amid this eager crowd there was no place,  
It seemed, for one so indolently aimless.  
Jostled by all this swift financial flurry,  
I too, I thought, must rouse myself and hurry.

And so I scooted on like anything,  
An air of resolution on my visage  
Fashioned to make me like some merchant king  
Intent to stamp himself at least on his age.  
And in a step or two a change came o'er me,  
And golden visions seemed to float before me.

And many other men, a motley crew,  
Drawn, I suppose, by these ecstatic visions,  
Along the City street were hurrying too,  
Heedless of hindrance, reckless of collisions.

A quest they had and a resolve to win it :  
"There's something on," I thought, "and I'll be in it."

I followed one who seemed to promise pelf :  
It came from every pore in all his fat form ;  
And then, I know not how, I found myself  
Seated upon a bench before a platform ;  
And there I found what I had long been seeking,  
For Herbert Wellesley Rossiter was speaking.

Who knows not Herbert ? He is of the men  
Who made the Empire—not as Romans made it,  
Or Genghis Khan or Alexander, when  
With fire and sword they harried and invaded.  
He worked—we have it in his own confessions—  
By giving cheques and getting fat concessions.

His mind was most inadequately stored :  
At school and college he was dull and stupid.  
Men he despised ; by women he was bored :  
He did not once, in fact, give way to Cupid.  
He did no work, he did not seem for play made,  
This hulking lout of very common clay made.

His wit was small ; his wisdom seemed to lie  
Mainly in jests that stung and jeers that hurt you.  
For daily life his standard was not high :  
Honour he scorned, and much derided virtue :  
"Its own reward ?" he sneered, "Too low the price is ;  
I much prefer the market rate for vices."

"Why strive, since strife makes heat?" he said: it seemed  
That money down was easier and cooler,  
And so he drew his cheques, and paid, and dreamed  
A world of dupes with Rossiter as ruler.  
Those who outwitted him he liked, nor pitied  
But only laughed at those whom he outwitted.

Oft had I wanted to behold this man,  
Hero of countless anecdotes and stories,  
Hear him expound some new financial plan,  
Or tell the tale of all his ancient glories.  
Till now from print I merely had inferred him,  
And lo! by chance I sat and saw and heard him.

Men who make Empire should not speak: the rule  
Bears no exception at the present day.  
Those massive thoughts which, if transformed to deeds,  
Flutter the dove-cotes of diplomacy,  
Make nations tremble, and can carve their way  
To fame and fortune on a stricken field—  
These thoughts, so great, so true, so numerous,  
Brook not the trammels of our native tongue.  
A man may *think*, "I'll plant the Union Jack  
Triumphant on the ramparts of the foe;  
Civilisation shall attend my steps;  
Progress shall be my handmaid; I will bring  
Plenty and peace where chaos was before."  
All this a man may think, but if he strives  
To utter what he thinks it's ten to one  
(It may be more, I am not skilled in odds)  
His tongue will trip him and his words will prove

Traitors, and wheresoever gapes a hole,  
Seen by all men, avoidable and large,  
Into its depths his woful foot must plunge,  
Though all the world should warn and call him back.  
Of these was Rossiter, the man of cheques.  
I saw him standing on the platform, flanked  
By listening peers : a Duke was on his right ;  
Upon his left a monied Marquis shone ;  
Two Earls, three Viscounts gilded the array,  
Barons and younger scions, Hons., were there,  
Strewed o'er the platform thick as autumn leaves.  
Rulers of Banks and princes of finance,  
Men at whose nod the giddy millions flew,  
Were ranged about him, and the hall was packed  
From door to daïs, seats and gangways, too,  
Were crammed with sympathetic City men.  
And in his front, before a table, sat  
The keen reporters in a serried row,  
Their ears intent to hear his eloquence,  
Their pencils sharpened swift to write it down.  
They did not seem unkind ; their look was bland,  
Much like the look of ordinary men.  
Their homes in Camberwell or Islington,  
Clapham or Balham, Battersea or Bow,  
Were cheerful homes ; they lived industrious lives,  
Respected by their neighbours, went to church,  
And paid their rent, and brought their children up,  
And gave their wives the wherewithal to keep  
Wolves from the door and victuals on the board.  
Who could have thought they were so terrible  
That Rossiter should fear them ? Yet they turned

His blood to water as they sat and wrote  
There in their devilish shorthand what he spoke.  
Words, words! Where were they? All the careful words  
That he had trimmed and polished for his use?  
Forgotten like a dream, and in their stead  
Danced in his brain a troop of flighty words,  
Wrong, but alluring, words that beckoned him,  
Saying, "Come, use me; I am what you seek."  
And this, or something like it, was his speech:—  
"Ahem—I never thought—at least, I did—  
But there, you know me—you have heard my name—  
Ahem"—(*a voice, "Speak up!"*)—"It's jolly fine  
To say, 'speak up,' but let the gentleman,  
That is, if truly he's a gentleman,  
Which"—(*interruption, mingled with applause*)—  
"Well, if he wants to speak himself he can,  
Not now, but later"—(*voices: "What about  
The Blacklock Syndicate?"*)—"The Syndicate  
Was never better: ten per cent it paid  
Last year—but, let me see, I meant to say  
Something—what was it?—ah, I recollect,  
Something about our mines in Turkestan."  
(*Wild cheers, the audience shouting as one man.*)  
"They're pretty good—eh? what?—there's nothing much  
The matter with the mines." (*Applause.*) "I say  
Those who foretold their ruin are but curs,  
Mean, whisky-soaking curs. I never mince  
My words." ("You don't.") "I know what's what"—  
("You do")—  
"And mean to have it all the time." ("Bravo!")  
"I don't think much of statesmen." ("Nor do we.")

“They seem to wish to stamp our commerce out  
With silly theories of right and wrong.  
There’s not a patriot amongst them all.  
I’m for the Union Jack”—(“*You are! you are!*”—  
“The good old interest-bearing Union Jack,  
The flag of freedom and the badge of trade.”  
(*Immense applause, the audience rising up  
And singing “Rule Britannia.”*) “I’m the man  
To show—ahem—(*he drank some water here*)—  
What was I saying?—ah—I beg to move  
That we adopt the Board’s report, and pass  
The balance-sheet which is attached thereto.”  
With this he ended, and sat down and wiped  
His humid brow, and all the gathering  
Broke in a storm of loud applause, and men  
Yelled their approval, and the meeting seemed  
One mad confusion of concordant cheers.  
And the stout Duke who sat by Rossiter  
Whispered, “Well done”; the Marquis and the Earls  
And all the Barons on the platform, too,  
Beamed their delight:—“You didn’t tell them much,”  
Opined the Duke, “but what you said was more,  
Far more, than ample to confirm their faith.”  
And I too went direct and bought a bull  
Of the Consolidated Turkestans,  
Thus proving that though eloquence is much,  
Money is more and Rossiter is great.

In many most alluring things  
At which a mild man winces  
He shone, this intimate of kings,  
This bosom-friend of princes.

In fact, of those who played with Fate,  
    And boldly sought to boss it e'er,  
No man was ever half so great  
    As Herbert Wellesley Rossiter.  
He owned a private troupe of Peers,  
    And many a trick he taught them ;  
He always thought in hemispheres,  
    And very often bought them.  
He took a massive size in hats,  
    His head was so Titanic ;  
He drank his beer and wine from vats ;  
    His feasts were Aldermanic.  
He travelled fast in special trains  
    Wherever he was able :  
While other men wore Albert chains,  
    He much preferred a cable.  
Time had a value in his eyes,  
    And so its course he reckon'd  
By watches of a soup-plate size  
    That struck each separate second.  
Some simple thing like "dash" or "zounds"  
    He said—he found it noted :  
He would have paid a million pounds  
    To be less widely quoted.  
If ever he should chance to chaff,  
    Or if his looks seemed solemn,  
In paragraph on paragraph  
    And column after column  
He found it down as "Painful News,"  
    Or "Smiles that may console us,"  
Or thus—"The *Banner* interviews  
    The Owner of Pactolus."

His team of minor poets hymned  
    His praise in rather puny verse :  
If anything, their efforts dimmed  
    A man who ran the universe.  
If asked to read their stuff himself,  
    He muttered fiercely, "Stow it!"  
As great men do, he paid the pelf,  
    But much despised the poet.  
Though other folk he far surpassed,  
    He did not ask to do so :  
He had no wish to grow so vast ;  
    He simply went and grew so.  
He never knew a single need ;  
    Some men whose day is over  
Must go to grass or run to seed :—  
    He always lived in clover.  
At last, while all men owned him great,  
    His very greatness bored him ;  
Of fame and wealth this overweight  
    No pleasure could afford him.  
" My millions I must spend," said he ;  
    "No more I'll try to pile 'em."  
He went and built a gallery,  
    And founded an asylum.  
He made a little private war,  
    And very ill he made it ;  
His army was a large one, for  
    •He punctually paid it.  
He advertised himself as one  
    Who answered begging letters ;  
He gave a cheque to every dun  
    Who troubled needy debtors.

He took a trip to Monaco,  
And, though he had no mascot,  
He couldn't waste enough, and so  
He tried his luck at Ascot.  
And yet he failed to tire his star,  
Although the man was clever,  
And, as I write, is richer far  
And wretcheder than ever.

## V.

## HOMER THEOPHILUS RENTON.

GREATNESS! What is it? To be born a Prince,  
To pule in purple swaddling clothes and chew  
With toothless gums a natal silver spoon,  
Is nothing: any self-respecting babe,  
If but his fate shook out the glittering chance,  
Could do it, so to speak, upon his head.  
How oft, unless our novelists have erred,  
The babes of humble ploughmen have been changed  
At birth for babes of lordly parents born.  
The little changelings looked so much the same,  
The high-born and the lowly: both had heads,  
Legs, arms, and all that may pertain thereto.  
Both had been dipped, it would appear, in port,  
And had retained the colour of the wine.  
Both closed their fists and in their leisure time  
Sparred a brisk round or two with unseen foes.  
Both yelled, and took their nourishment with zest,  
Had blobs for noses, little beads for eyes,  
Bats' wings for ears, and both were formed to be  
The fond delight of grandmamas and aunts.

In fact there was no difference, and they grew  
Without a murmur to their changed estates.  
Giles was a Viscount, but he scared the birds,  
Hereded the sheep, or drove a team a-field.  
The Viscount Montgelas, his true name Giles,  
Was swished at Eton, went to Trin. Coll. Cam.,  
And, later, drove his team to Hurlingham.  
He took his swishings like the lord he wasn't,  
Became a blood at Cambridge, and was famed  
As polo-player, hunting man, and shot.  
His talents in the House of Lords were such  
That he was made an under secretary ;  
And men remembered his great-grandfather,  
And hailed him very chip o' the ancient block,—  
What time poor Giles, the true-born chip of chips,  
Within whose veins the blood of many peers  
Blended and ran, was ploughing steadily,  
And sowing seed, and bringing up a brood  
Of lusty children in his cottage home.  
Then came the crash—a foster-mother spoke,  
Pricked by her conscience, and revealed the fraud.  
And then—but, bah ! I'm straying from my task :  
I only meant to show that men may be,  
If a rash foster-mother should misguide  
Their destinies, far greater than themselves  
Without so much as lifting up a hand.  
These rouse no admiration in my mind,  
Although I envy them their wealth and rank,  
The gold-topped fittings of their dressing-bags,  
Their rent-rolls and their horses and their lands,  
And all their store of studs and links and pins,

Their valets and their footmen and their coats,  
Their fancy-patterned waistcoats and their ties,  
And the meek deference of men they meet ;  
And, above all, the gay, the reckless ease  
With which they put a penny in each slot  
At railway stations on bank-holidays.  
Oft have I seen them, caring not a whit  
Though the false dial should declare their weight  
As eighteen stone and then should make it ten,  
Or even if the coin that should have drawn  
A pure fruit tablet from its coy recess  
Produced a box of matches to their grasp.  
Yet I admire them not, but I admire  
Men who achieve their greatness for themselves :—  
Of these was Renton, Homer T., the bard.

Poets are made : their wildly rolling eye,  
Their hair, the poses which they use to bore us,  
Are art's, not nature's, and they give the lie  
To what was idly said by ancient Florus.  
If metric fame from early youth they're bent on,  
They make themselves : this was the case with Renton.

A Rector I have seen in early days :  
He wished for things, but, having sent his wish up,  
He worked with might and main to win such praise  
As might entitle him to be a Bishop,  
Until he realised his youthful dreaming,  
And blossomed out, lawn-sleeved and bland and  
beaming.

Jobbers who haunt the Stock Exchange are prone  
To raise their voice—they do not often spare it.  
From some exalted perch they shout alone ;  
This is the way in which they millionaire it.  
They end, although their manners are not courtly,  
Park-Laned and shooting-boxed and very portly.

And I have watched a barrister apply,  
His subtle mind to many a complex problem.  
The fees were great and his ambitions high ;  
He knew solicitors and how to nobble 'em.  
And while his arguments the Court were shaking,  
I felt I saw a Law Lord in the making.

All these I knew ; but never till I met  
Homer T. Renton had I watched a poet,  
Or seen him keep his plant of metre wet  
With studious water that might help to grow it.  
He was, in fact, a most industrious climber  
Up fame's high hill, this manufactured rhymer.

A dining club there was of men  
Prepared to puff their fellows ;  
Whoever wielded brush or pen,  
The rest applied the bellows.  
Young Renton needed wind to fan  
His dull poetic embers ;  
He much approved the puffing plan,  
And so he joined the members.

His early efforts were not high—  
A Triolet, or Sonnet,  
An Ode to Araminta's Eye,  
A Ballade on her Bonnet.  
These little tricks of sentiment  
Were voted fine, but finer  
His "Stanzas to our President  
Considered as a Diner."  
He exercised his intellect  
On "Celia going Shrimping,"  
In thirty lines of poor effect,  
As limp as they were limping.  
He hymned her pink and tender toes  
Divested of their stocking  
(Of course the beggar called it "hose,"  
And seemed to think it shocking).  
He praised her ankle trim and neat,  
And said, about her tootsies,  
How sweet a sight a pair of feet  
Without a pair of boots is.  
Next he composed a Villanelle  
(He knew that if you rub men  
The right way down you please them well)  
On all his fellow club-men.  
His fellow club-men cheered the lad,  
His praise with praises matching;  
They scratched his back, for each one had  
A back that wanted scratching.  
And so in time he came to be,  
Although he did his work ill,  
The poet of a coterie,  
The singer of a circle.

But soon he felt ambition stir ;  
Such private praise seemed stinted ;  
He found a kindly publisher,  
And got his poems printed.  
Some poets, men of heart and soul,  
The sort that fame is bright with,  
Have private stacks of native coal  
To keep their fire alight with.  
They count no cost, but feed the flame,  
However small their earning,  
And give no heed to praise or blame  
If but the fire keeps burning.  
Our hero worked in other ways  
To eke his bardic fate out :  
Where others heaped with coal the blaze  
He went and raked the grate out.  
Then, sifting through his metric sieves  
These literary cinders,  
He took some good infinitives  
And split them into flinders.  
(You see I drop the metaphor,  
But metaphors are vexing ;  
To keep them up grows more and more  
Unspeakably perplexing.)  
Of random rhymes he had a pack  
By which he was outwitted  
And dragged—he couldn't call them back—  
Beyond what sense permitted.  
Nay, sometimes he was cockneyfied,  
And when the day was “dawning,”  
The poet all the rules defied,  
And made it rhyme with “morning.”

Some ravening critics left their cage—  
They bared their teeth for tearing—  
And took each palpitating page  
And rent it past repairing.  
They plied their most sarcastic pens  
To make the poet rue it ;  
Romeike sent the specimens,  
And so the author knew it.  
Nothing availed this first defeat  
To keep the man from fighting :  
He owned a bullet-proof conceit,  
And simply went on writing.  
Let Culture, when she hears his name,  
Deny his reputation,—  
A sort of poet he became  
By force of iteration.  
And, quoted in no causerie,  
Nor talked about in leaders,  
By some strange chance he seems to be  
A man of many readers.

## VI.

## THE CHAM OF TARTARY.

*Transcribed freely from the Chronicles of Neh-Seh-Foo,  
the Tartar historian.*

IN Tartary a thousand years ago  
There was no Cham (pronounced as in champagne).  
It is an ancient honourable post,  
Not equal to the chiefship, but a man  
May be a Cham and then become the chief.  
Wherefore desired by many men it was,  
But none was reckoned fitting. Factions came,  
And strove and claimed, and counterclaimed and strove  
And one of them was mighty in the land,  
And all but gained it. Let me here relate  
What men they were, and how a clever coup  
Which these had purposed passed away in smoke.

And, first, though each revolving day  
Brought out a new aspirant,  
Not one of them seemed fit to play  
The leading part of tyrant.

A. looked a man of strength compact,  
Progressive, sound, enlightened,  
A statesman who might sternly act  
When other folk were frightened.  
His eloquence had earned him praise  
Where'er his words resounded ;  
He had a trick of solemn phrase  
Rhetorically rounded.  
But all his warmth he hid from sight :  
I question if he felt it,—  
An ice-block that reflected light,  
But somehow never melted.

Poor A. ! he didn't fill the public eye  
Of Tartary, and so they put him by.  
The intervening letters I shall skip,  
And, next, for F. my glowing pen I'll dip.

F. from the moment of his birth  
Seemed destined to inherit  
Good business brains and solid worth,  
And every minor merit.  
In Latin grammar days he bore  
A character so pious,  
That building Balbus pleased him more  
Than wall-destroying Caius.  
Poor Balbus by the common herd  
Of boys—a painful matter—  
Is usually *not* preferred ;  
They much applaud the latter.

Men said of F., when he displayed  
A steadiness so sober,  
" He will not fade as leaves do fade,  
Nor die in chill October.  
" And while he lives we guarantee  
No act of his will hurt you,  
This fashion-plate of probity,  
And pattern-book of virtue."  
And, even when his eloquence  
Grew warm and eulogistic,  
Plain platitudinous good sense  
Was its characteristic.  
His views he never quite defined :  
He liked a combination.  
You could not say he had a mind  
Averse from vacillation.  
To black he would not take his oath ;  
He was by white offended,  
Preferring grey, a tint where both  
Inextricably blended.  
In short, he was a man to trust  
As always *sui compos* :  
There never was a man so just—  
Or so superbly pompous.

Alas ! the world to solid claims is deaf :  
It simply smiled, and wouldn't hear of F.  
And next in order let us try to see  
What was the view that most men held of G.

G. was in truth a thing of joy,  
Smooth cheek and well-set shoulder :  
He always seemed to stay a boy,  
While other men grew older.  
Delight of battle with his peers  
He formerly had tasted ;  
And now he grieved to see his years  
So miserably wasted.  
Whene'er this blossom tried to blow,  
A chill wind came and shut him :  
He seemed to be a stick, although  
Not one of us had cut him.  
Yet soon he found his chance decline,  
And all his friends grow cooler :  
They said they had to draw the line  
At such a wooden ruler.

So G. remained, his blighted prospects round him :  
They left him wanting, as, in fact, they found him.  
And, still proceeding by the alphabet  
In order due, to H. at last we get.

H. was a man removed from strife :  
With heat you could not tax him.  
He had for every turn of life  
A philosophic maxim.  
To things that tickled you or me  
His attitude was passive.  
His mind was universally  
Acknowledged to be massive.

While other men of half his weight  
Grew ardent or sarcastic,  
He never failed to be sedate  
And unenthusiastic.  
When some flushed red he kept so pale  
And calm that, as for me, I've  
Oft thought of him as of a snail  
Astray within a beehive.  
And, though he took a heap of pains,  
While we were dilettanti,  
The red corpuscles in his veins  
Were judged to be too scanty.  
And so the Fates decreed his fall,  
And forced us to reject him ;  
But still we felt that we could all  
Continue to respect him.

In truth, no man alive appeared to fit :  
Either the hole was round and men were square,  
Or, on the other hand, the hole was square,  
The men perversely formed and wholly round,—  
I know not which, but this full well I know,  
There was no Cham, and Tartary was sad.  
But suddenly a wondrous rumour grew,  
No man knew whence it came, but oh, it spread  
Throughout the land, that Tartary at last,  
Travailing long, had now brought forth a Cham.  
The 'Tartar Times'—the files are there to show  
I speak the truth—announced that this was so.  
All the rejected ones declared it true,  
A., F., and G., and philosophic H.

In fact, a Tartar chieftain seemed to be  
As fairly caught as ever Tartar was.  
“Who is he?” asked the crowd. “He is,” they said,—  
His friends, I mean, who tried to run the show,—  
“The most magnetic of magnetic men.  
Think of the famous chiefs who in our land  
Were ever great and eloquent and wise,  
Witty and able, statesmanlike and just,  
Noble, unselfish, patriotic, true,—  
Add them together, treble the result,  
And you will have, approximately summed,  
Him you have heard of whom you swift shall know.”  
“When may we meet him?” was the next request.  
“Soon, soon,” they said, and smiled, and went and bought  
Much store of limelight, and prepared a stage;  
And paragraph on paragraph went round  
Saying, “On such and such a day a man  
Speaks to his fellow-men—let all men come,  
All who indeed are men, to hear his voice.”  
And on the predetermined day they came  
From north, from south, from east and west in crowds.  
“At last,” they said, “at last!” and, lo, they saw  
High on a platform raised above their heads  
The man whom most of all they yearned to see—

*(The lines describing the greater part of the  
proceedings are unfortunately lost.)*

“Be great, be earnest, let your hearts be turned  
To wisdom, be not——” What he would have said  
To perorate with never will be known;  
For at this moment, as he waved his arms

And all men listened, came a swift collapse.  
His figure shrank, there was a grating whirr,  
As of machinery that finds an end  
By running down—two gasping clicks he gave,  
Essaying still to speak, and so sank down  
Prone on the platform, and the crowded hall  
Swayed with emotion ; women screamed, and four,  
The wives of mayors or county councillors,  
Fell in a faint, and so were carried out.  
It was a dreadful scene ; but when they came,  
Solemn and sad, to pick the speaker up,  
Lo, they discovered not a man at all,  
But just a clock-work figure framed and set  
By some artificer's surpassing skill—  
Wheels, rods, and springs all cunningly devised—  
And clothed that it might seem to be a man.

*(A few lines, no doubt describing the resentment  
of the multitude, are missing.)*

Hence came the proverb into Tartary—  
“A clock-work man who wants to be sublime  
Must be well wound, or else he'll waste his time.

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